

AUSTRALIA'S MOST POPULAR SELF-SUFFICIENCY MAGAZINE

# Grass Roots

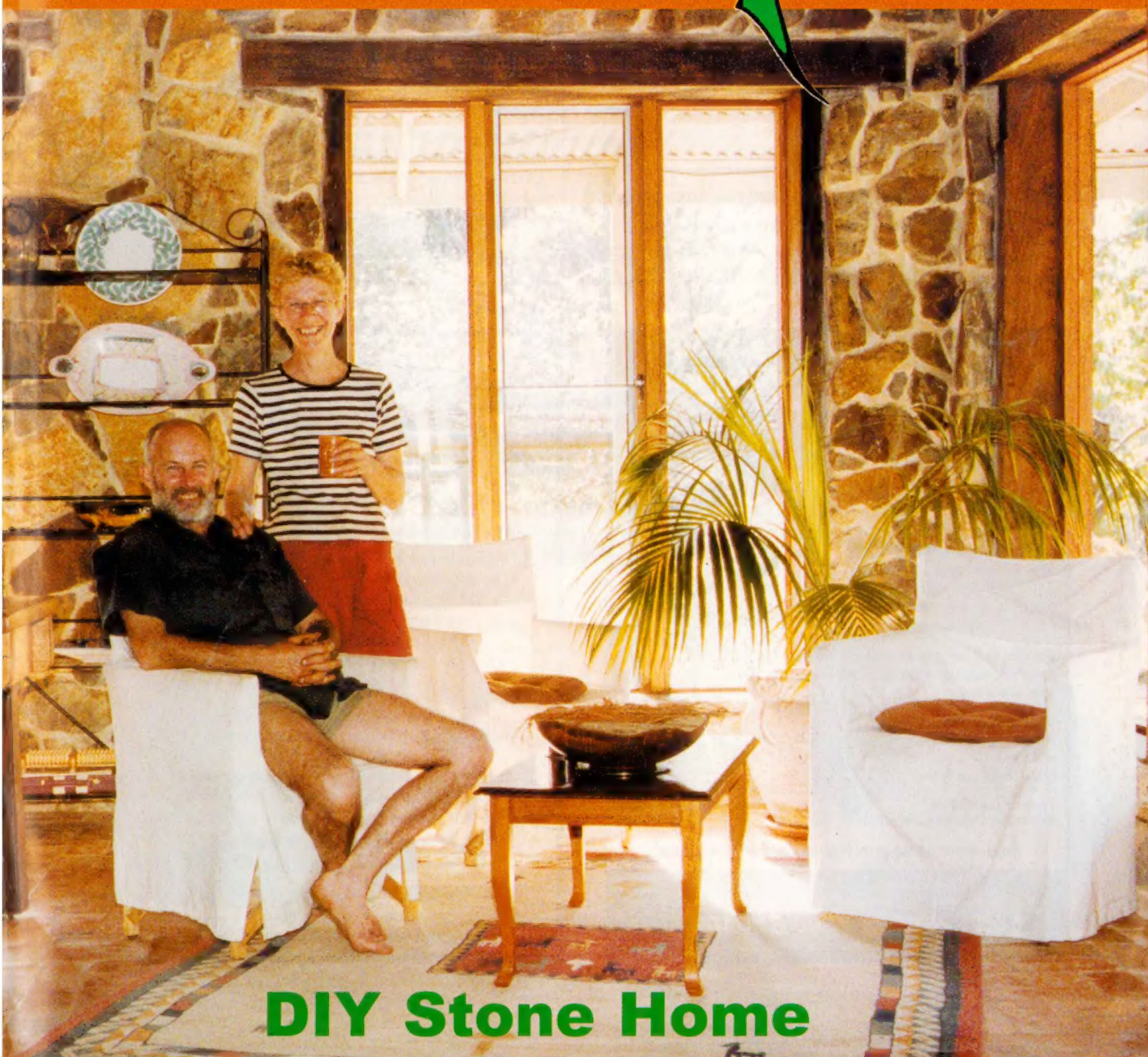
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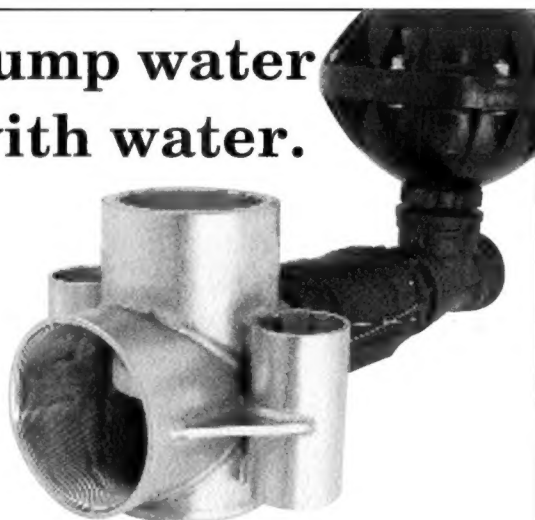
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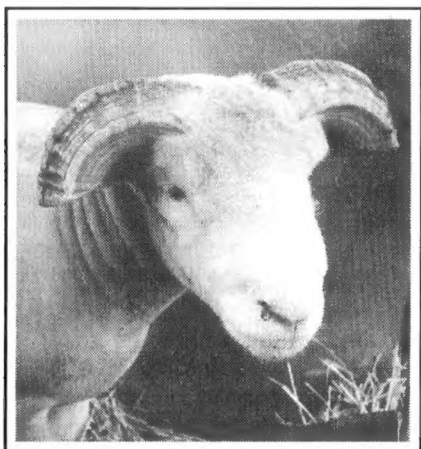
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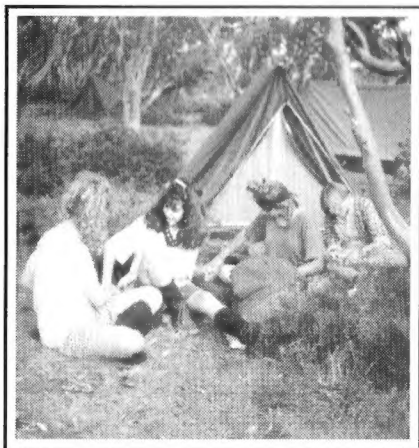
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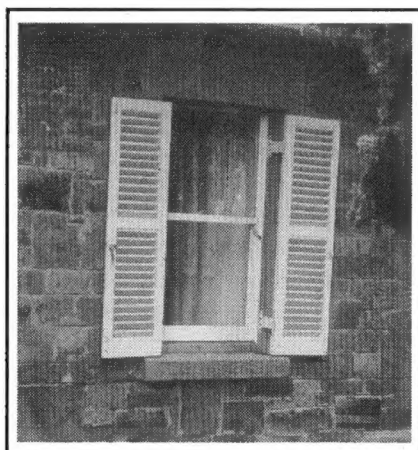
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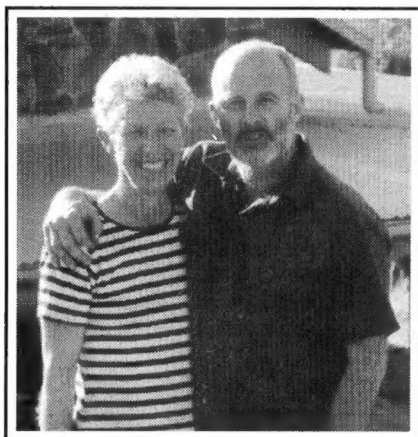
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## COVER PHOTOS

**Front Cover:** Brendan O'Leary and Catherine Upcher are delighted. They built this stone house themselves and have incorporated both passive and active solar features into the design. Note the sealed clinker brick floor, which is hardy and stain resistant. Just don't drop your china! Read their story on page 6. Photo by Marcel Aucar.

**Back Cover:** A Steiner School education gives children the opportunity to explore the world around them in a practical and enjoyable hands-on way. Here, young Lyall wades in the clear waters of the Upper Manning River. Find out more about the Manning River Steiner School on page 53.

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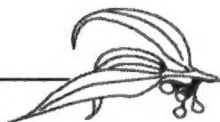
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## GUMNUT GOSSIP

by Megg Miller.

Where would we be without supermarkets reminding us Christmas is coming? Tacky wares have been on the shelves locally for months, perhaps to satisfy those who compulsively spend. It has the opposite effect on the GR team, they all confess to averting eyes when they pass displays and it's likely most readers feel similarly. We don't feel ready for Christmas and don't want it rammed down our throats. So where have the 12 months gone? I swear I've only just got all last Christmas's cards off, surely there's time for a breather before tackling it all over again. If you feel a little jaded by the business of Christmas – and isn't that what it's largely become? – you'll enjoy reading how one GR family has handled the issue and come up with a celebration that is about simplicity and sharing. Consumerism isn't synonymous with Christmas and we're sure that after reading Julia LeMonde's 'Spécial Christmas Spirit' you'll feel recharged and ready to plan quality time with friends and family.

You'll be able to eat well too, thanks to the generosity of readers sharing their gluten-free recipes. The response to our request for tried and tested favourite fare has been terrific and we look forward to featuring recipes in forthcoming issues. While we're discussing food and cooking, you'll find details of a recipe competition in this issue initiated by Roslyn Deakin, who regularly advertises her range of veggie cookery books. So out with the pots and pans and see what you can come up with. What sort of recipes? Gluten-free, what else! If you have already posted off a special recipe, you can still send a separate copy to Roslyn. Details are printed on page 10. We look forward to hearing about the competition from Roslyn and wish entrants the best of luck.

We've decided to hold a small competition too. When two complimentary buckets of seeds arrived from Mr Fothergill's, the well-known seed company, we decided they would make a wonderful prize and thought why not ask for the best balcony gardening idea.

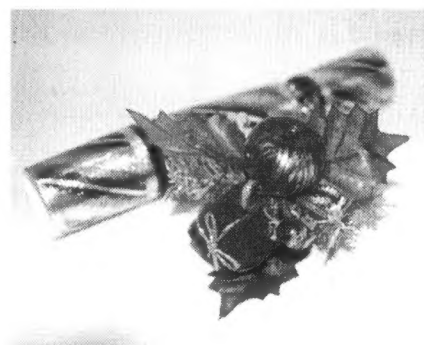
Naturally, you don't need to have a balcony to contribute; if you grow in containers or planters, you will be familiar with the restrictions of balcony gardening. Join in the fun and the competition: the winner may well be you.

Our cover photos last issue must have struck a chord as we received lots of delighted comments. The best has to have been from zany tropical gardener and writer Jane 'Many Leaves' Lawrance. Jane sent a note saying how much she loved the roses, 'just wish we could scratch 'n smell'. It did seem a pity because Sue and Don's roses are gorgeous smelling. But just imagine initiating a process like scratch and sniff for the back cover; fabulous with pics of plants and herbs, and even the occasional landscape. But, if my memory serves me right, we've had the odd animal or fowl featured there, large as life. No Jane, eau de lanolin, black pig or chook feather is not everyone's fancy. But the roses, now that would have been something.

Letters also popped into our mail box in response to my comments about Roberino last issue. He said we were too kind and that praise and acknowledgement would probably encourage him to send more. He could see this mightn't be a good idea: 'Don't want my huge pile of correspondence to fall over and injure Mary!'

And my query as to the effectiveness of the recycling guru's insulation suggestions using milk cartons has been satisfactorily answered.

Anne Reid of Calista, WA, wrote 'Did it work? Yes it certainly did!' Anne and husband Ron bought a block of land in south-west WA for camping during weekends and holidays. A few amenities were added over the years to make camping with children easier, then Ron decided he could build a house. Six years and many kilometres of travel later it was ready for habitation. An area left under the house looked suitable for conversion into a spare room. 'This is where Roberino comes in. I read GR and loved the idea of insulating walls using milk cartons. We travelled 262 kilometres from Perth



to the block with a car loaded with milk cartons covered in Alfoil. We lined the interior walls and this large room is cool in summer and warm in winter and has been for the past 10 years. If we had known about it earlier, we would have insulated the whole house. Thanks Roberino, it saved us a lot of money.'

I'm sorry for being such a doubting Thomas, Roberino, and questioning your practical skills!

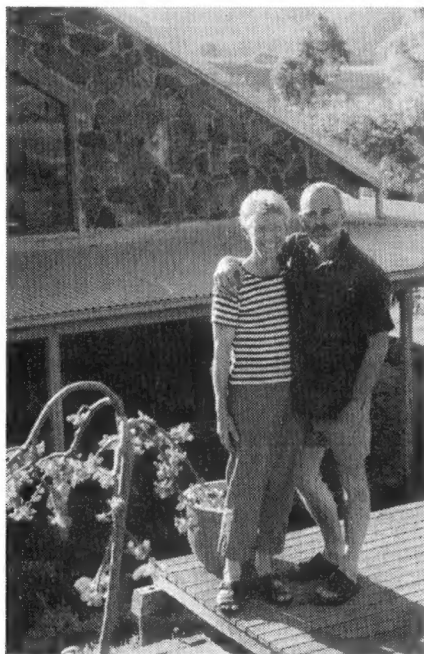
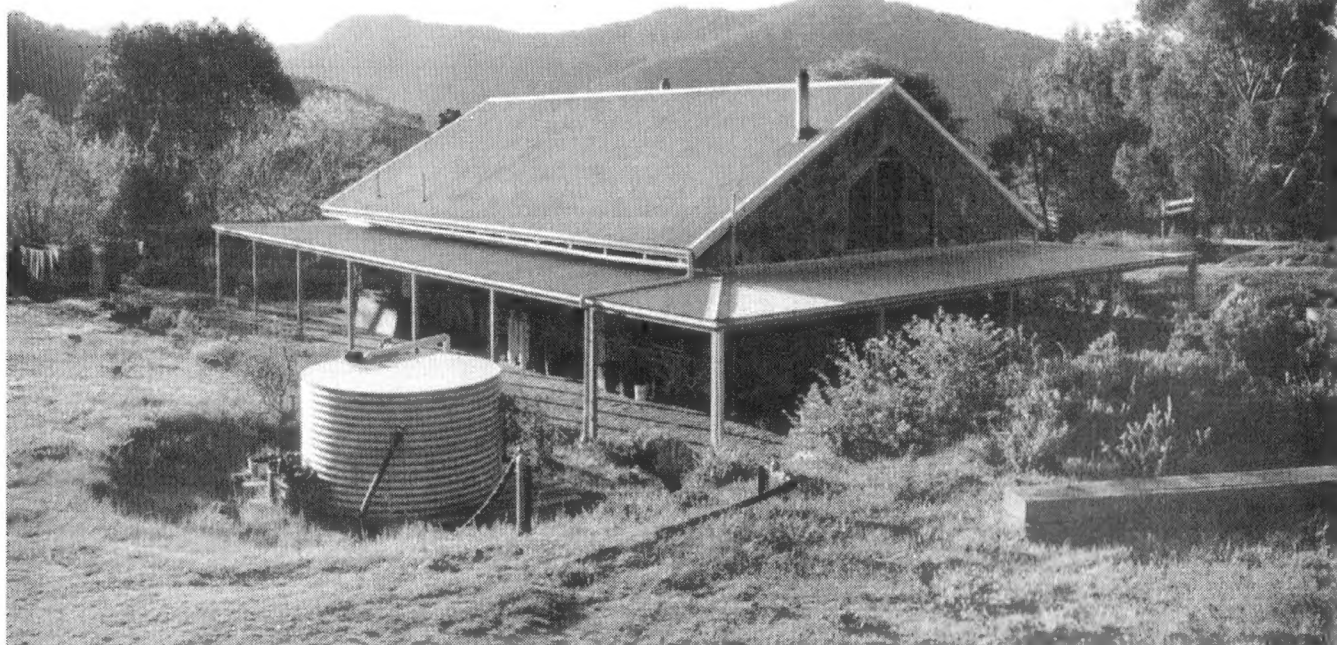
Perhaps the questioning should have been restricted to the peccadillos of modern technology. We had a day here recently when we nearly went silly because of a whistling sound from the computer. The girls pressed and prodded and finally decided it was in the server. David was duly consulted and said he'd come in later and have a look. Sabrina sought refuge in the back room and Sue purchased ear plugs. Fortunately, neither Mary nor Suni was at work – it would have driven them mad. David arrived late in the day and solved the problem in an instant. Folders had been pushed up onto a keyboard and the contact and vibration caused the noise. Yep, we did all feel silly.

It's time, obviously, for a break and to sit around and recharge our batteries. We'll all have the opportunity for a rest over Christmas, but there's lots to be done before then. Brightly patterned homemade envelopes are already turning up, and our first card for the season arrived in July! Happy GR reading, have fun with the recipes and we look forward to catching up again in 2004. Merry Christmas and a peaceful and productive New Year. ☘

# HEAVEN IN THE BUSH

## Handmade Stone Home

by Catherine Upcher, Dederang, Vic.



Catherine and Brendan found their slice of heaven in the lush Kiewa Valley.

Brendan and I met in 1982 and soon found that we were escaping the metropolis every weekend to walk, climb and ski in the country. Life in Melbourne had become routine.

In 1985 we decided to look for land in north-east Victoria, an area that was unknown to me, but familiar to Brendan. When we first caught sight of the lush, green Kiewa Valley, stretching out to the south from the Dederang Gap and bounded by the Victorian Alps, we knew it had to be here.

Nine days later, after having searched the Ovens and Kiewa Valleys and every real estate agent in between, we found our 14-acre plot. It had a dam and a converted dairy in which we could live. The land was a little off the beaten track with a beautiful aspect of surrounding bush and hills.

We left Melbourne in early 1986 with all our modest possessions and moved into our 'dairy' – complete with chip heater for hot water, one solar

panel for light, and a combustion heater. There was no connection to the grid! To say we were in heaven was an understatement. Our adjustment was immediate and wholehearted. We lived in this small, simple space for 10 years.

The urge to plant, to create, to revegetate an otherwise barren piece of land was our priority. Vegetables, natives, flowers, shade areas – everything was close packed, expressing our urgency for growth. We joined Landcare, frequented nurseries and planted obsessively, with little idea of the ultimate effect. It was an evolutionary process, with some attention to species native to the area, to height and to keeping the hills and ridgelines visible in the background. We had a vague idea of the location of the house we wanted to build, which we began in 1990.

From the beginning we were sure of one thing – we wanted a house that was elementally expressive, using



stone, earth and old timbers. The first design we drew up had a sod roof and was octagonal, extraordinary and costly. We finally settled for a simple rectangular design with a three-metre verandah that had always been a high priority. The inside was open plan and had services on the south side and bedrooms in the loft.

The plan finally gained council approval and we poured our concrete footings in autumn 1990. No slab, just footings. It wasn't just a financial issue, we had ideas about using bricks and slate for flooring. Our ideas were inspired by various sources: a long subscription to *Owner Builder* magazine, other literature on alternative building design and construction, passive solar information and alternative energy sources. We'd started collecting big sticks of timber, old doors and bricks soon after moving to our new environment.

I think Brendan had a vision of our house as a complete entity, but to me it was a slow and fragmentary thing. Though neither of us had any building experience, Brendan never doubted that we could do it and I took encouragement and inspiration from his certitude. We settled on 35- to 40-centimetre-thick stone walls (visible inside and out) for the shell, rammed earth for the internal partition walls (we thought it would be easier) and plaster and timber upstairs.

The 'stone conglomerate' – 'shot rock' – came from the Chiltern quarry. We had it delivered and, upon finding it much too big to handle, made several trips back to the quarry to look for the sizes and shapes we wanted. The rock is beautiful, varying in colour from cream through to blue-black, and within the walls there is the odd special rock from other sources – bluestone from the old shanty in Dederang, sandstone from Mt Porepunkah, a piece of basalt from the high plains.

We committed ourselves to using primarily recycled timber: messmate, tallow wood, alpine ash, ironbark, Sydney blue gum, brush box – mostly sourced from Nullabor Timbers near Echuca. Other timbers used in the house were plantation grown.

For the ground floor area we used bricks, 100-year-old clinkers and old

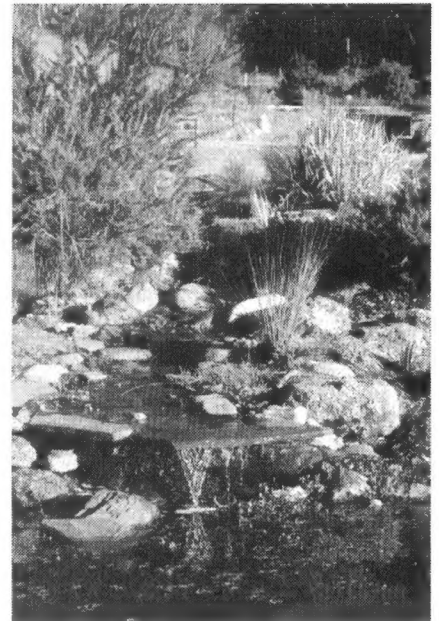
reds, and slate we excavated from a quarry near Beechworth. The bricks used inside and out on the verandah give a sense of flow and continuity.

Our home is a solid 10-metre by 16-metre building with 12 squares downstairs and nine squares in the loft area, which has a bedroom either end and a library and TV area in the middle. A substantial wooden staircase drops to the ground floor. We loved the look of almost floor to ceiling glass, displaying the expanse of low-maintenance garden – again linking inside and outside.

Shugg windows (no cross pieces) enabled us to achieve an uninterrupted view. We have not used double glazing and, although we know there is some heat loss, this is reduced by the generous verandah that surrounds the entire house.

Our combustion heater and noninsulated combustion stove provide a warm and comfortable environment, even on the coldest days. Curtains are absent from our house because the place is sufficiently private and they would have detracted from the simplicity and clean lines of stone, timber and glass. The house has lived up to expectations in terms of its passive solar attributes, being warm in winter and cool in summer.

Our home took us seven years to

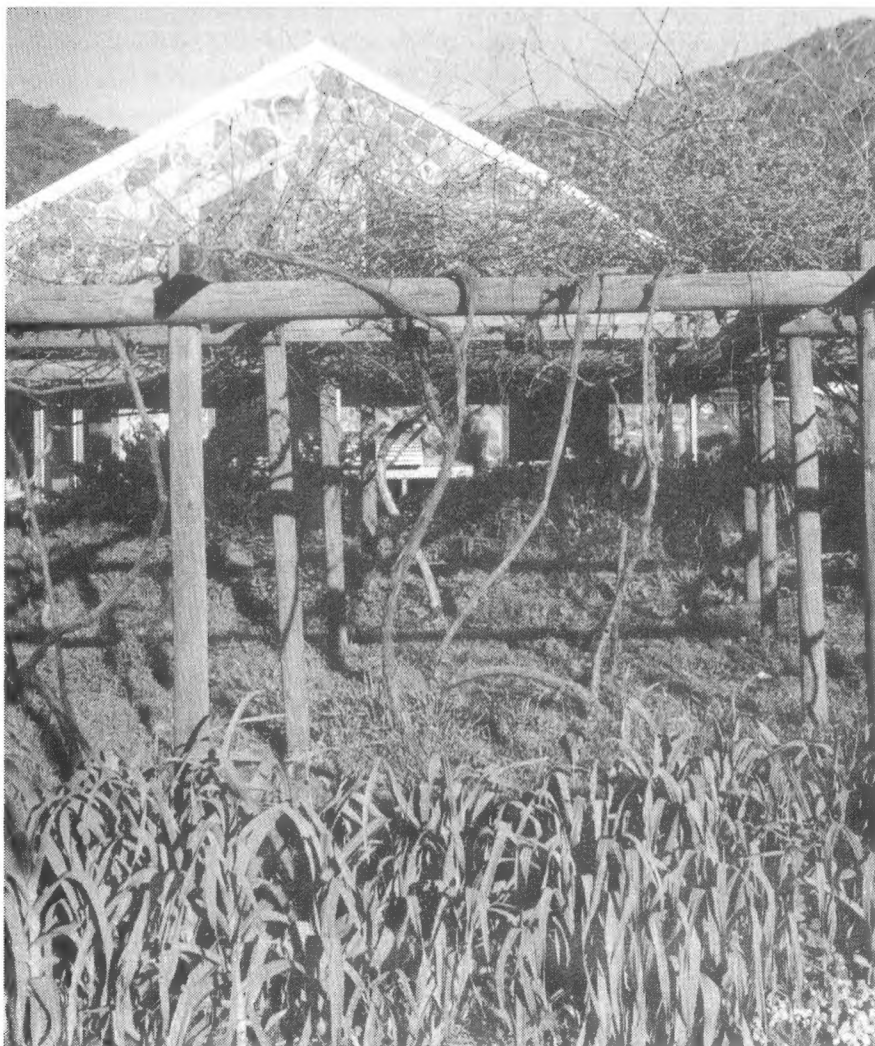


Many special features like this stream give the garden a peaceful ambience.

build and was 85 percent finished before we moved in. The space and grandeur were overwhelming at first, especially after having lived in such a confined area for so long. We are proud to think that our house is handmade, that we had very little assistance and that we are able to share it and our experience with friends and interested visitors. Naturally, we had some



The property is surrounded by beautiful bush and hills and even the octagonal earthen shed was designed to complement the natural elements. Photos by Marcel Aucar.



An eye-catching border of garlic in front of the grape vine and kiwi fruit arbour.

assistance with the plumbing, wiring and window glazing. Friends rallied around when the iron roof went on. If we had our time again we would probably consider better acoustics, but would change little else. The problem of heat in the upstairs areas will be rectified with fans and extractors.

I think Brendan and I are both straightforward, no-nonsense people who see elegance in simplicity and lack of clutter. We have given character and beauty to the house with painted earth walls and timber bench tops, the use of stainless steel and ripple iron, and our handmade table, bathroom mirror, towel racks and shelving.

The garden is a further means of decoration and outlet for creativity. We've built sheds from mudbricks and

straw bales, constructed grape vine and kiwi fruit arbours, created pond habitats, and incorporated different spaces to walk and sit. We have planted olives and experimented with growing macadamias and avocados, which are bearing nuts and fruit. Brendan has become enamoured of pure and rare breeds of poultry and has built a reputation as being knowledgeable about 'chook matters'. We are working on our native vegetation corridors to link the bush into the garden and onto the lane. This is our commitment as members of Land for Wildlife.

We have long been dedicated to being 'green', to putting something back, to striking a balance. Determined not to connect to the grid, we decided upon hydro as a cheaper alternative,

and a more constant source of power than solar. With Platypus Power micro-hydro systems being built in the Ovens Valley we were easily able to investigate the possibilities from the stream running in the valley below. The recent drought came as a wake-up call – we had no water to the house from our dam and not enough water to run the turbine. In spite of our pathological concerns about saving water, we suddenly found ourselves without. We have enlarged the dam, installed new tanks, installed 450-watt solar panels on the roof, and now feel that our system is more integrated.

Building the house has been an exercise in patience and tolerance – with each other; with each other's skills, or lack of them; with the time taken for each stage to be completed; with the midnight scrambles to cover the earth walls when it rained torrentially; with the hard work in lifting, placing and fitting good-sized stone to a great height; and with the difficulties of building without a constant source of power. Our generator served us well throughout the seven years and we celebrated each milestone along the way.

Future plans include working further on our plantings to extend the garden and reduce the areas to mow, creating new outdoor rooms, and building a balcony on the eastern side of the house. In the meantime, we have time to enjoy a quiet drink of an evening by our pond, listening to the frogs call and looking out for birds, turtles and lizards.

Catherine Upcher and Brendan O'Leary can be contacted at RMB 1122B, Kancoona via Wodonga 3691, or ph: 02-6028-9245. ♡

### \*\*\**Biodynamic Growing*\*\*\*

New magazine featuring Australian 'Demeter-standard' Biodynamics (as developed by Alex Podolinsky) for gardeners, smallholders and farmers, available December 2003.

- Why does Australia lead the world?
- Biodynamics and the environment.
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Send \$8 to Biodynamic Growing, PO Box 479, Leongatha 3953 (includes p&p).

92 Nerrena Hall Rd, Nerrena, Vic 3953.



# DIY Gift Tags

by Jane Evans, Sunshine, Vic.

**Feeling creative? These fun, simple cards will add pizzazz to any Chrissie present.**

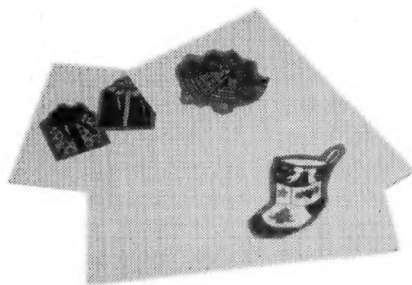
You've wrapped the bottles of homemade jam, Anzac biscuits and goat's milk soap in readiness for a community gift night. Suddenly you realise you've forgotten to buy gift tags. What can you do? A trip back to town is out so you will have to rely on ingenuity and imagination. If there are children handy to help cut and paste, you will not only save the occasion but distinguish your homemade gifts with unique, complementary gift cards.

## LEAF TAGS



Dry, flat, long leaves are best, especially those from eucalyptus species. If the leaf tags are not needed immediately, collect and press leaves under some heavy books or cardboard weighted down with bricks. Keep pressed until needed, then, using a felt-tipped pen, carefully print the recipient's name with a suitable greeting. A silver or gold pen produces a luxury effect, and a red pen a Christmassy touch. Adhere to present with a touch of glue or folded over piece of adhesive tape.

## MOTIFS FROM WRAPPING PAPER

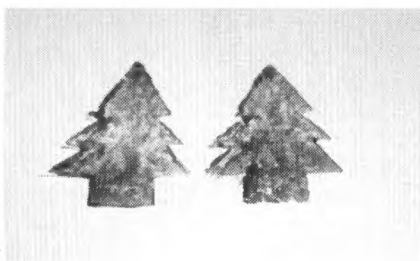


You don't need to be artistic to cut out motifs and paste onto card.



Check out the box of reusable wrapping paper for a piece with motifs that can be cut out and glued onto a piece of plain card. The better quality the wrapping paper, the nicer the design of the motif. Cut tags from plain recycled card, moving away from the predictable rectangle to shapes like a star, a simple Christmas tree outline, an oval or even a circle. Rotate motif around until you find the best position, then glue in place. Punch a hole, thread through fine ribbon, and attach to gift. The children might like to run a line of glue around the edges of the tag and sprinkle it with glitter if you have some.

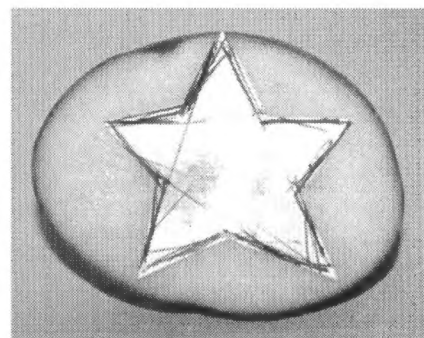
## VEGIE PRINTED TAGS



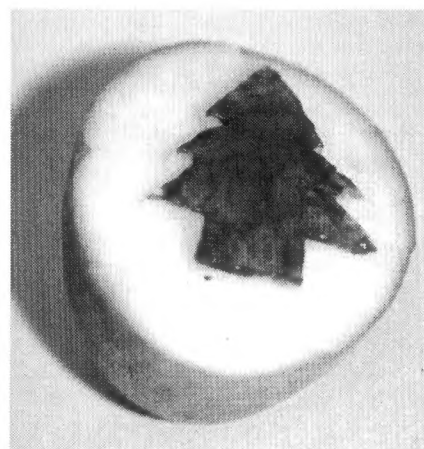
Provided you have some poster paint on hand this method is quick and very effective. Most of us are familiar with potato prints, but you can use sweet potato or even carrots just as well.

Prepare card tags so they are ready to be printed, then work out the designs you

want to use, maybe a star, a holly leaf or a simple miniature Chrissy tree. Cut the vegetable in half to give a flat surface on each side. You can draw your designs on the flesh, or, if you're brave, cut spontaneously. Cut away the vegie flesh you don't need in the print to a depth of 1 to 1½ centimetres. This should leave a fleshy, flat area that can be lightly dipped into a saucer of paint, and then pressed onto the card tag, leaving the positive image of the motif. Allow several hours for drying before handling.



Reduce mistakes by drawing your design on paper and cutting out, then place on the potato and cut around.



Half potato with a Christmas design inked up for printing.

# Coconut Fruit Mince Slice

**Bake this delicious slice before the festive rush, it's perfect for all occasions.**

This is a recipe vegetarians can enjoy as there is no suet fat included, unlike most traditional fare using mincemeat. If you are feeling creative, use shredded coconut instead of desiccated

## **Fruit Mince**

100 g apple, cored, finely chopped  
25 g butter  
75 g raisins  
75 g sultanas  
75 g currants  
50 g raw sugar  
1/2 tsp cinnamon, ground  
1/2 tsp nutmeg, ground  
1/2 tsp mixed spice, ground  
1 orange, grated rind and juice  
1 lemon, grated rind and juice  
125 g flaked almonds  
30 ml brandy

## **Base**

100 g butter  
50 g raw sugar  
175 g SR wholemeal flour

## **Topping**

2 eggs  
100 g raw sugar  
5 ml vanilla essence  
225 g fruit mince (see above)  
175 g desiccated coconut  
1 tbsp wholemeal flour  
1/2 tsp baking powder  
1/4 tsp salt

First make the fruit mince by placing all the ingredients except almonds and brandy into a deep ovenproof dish and mixing thoroughly. Cover with foil and bake in oven at 120° C for an hour. Stir mincemeat halfway through cooking.

Leave to cool before adding almonds and brandy. Keep refrigerated until ready to use – it will keep for a month in the fridge.

To make the base, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Stir in flour. Mix well and press evenly into an 18- x 23-centimetre tin that has been lined with greased greaseproof paper. Bake at 180° C for 10 minutes until pale golden.

Beat eggs, sugar and vanilla until thick and creamy. Stir in mincemeat and coconut. Mix well. Fold in combined flour, baking powder and salt. Spread topping evenly over base. Return to oven and bake for a further 20 – 30 minutes until fruit mince filling is set.

Once cool cut into fingers and store in an airtight container. ☘

## COMPETITIONS

### Cooks And Gardeners, Your Chance To Win

We don't run many competitions in GR, but have two opportunities for readers to try their hands at in this issue.

#### **Win Vegie Cookbooks**

Roslyn Deakin, compiler of a range of

cookbooks aimed at helping gardeners imaginatively use their vegetable abundance, has kindly offered a full set of her 13 cookbooks to the reader who sends in the best gluten-free recipe. This competition is to be judged by Roslyn.

- One recipe per entrant please, so if you have lots, choose your own favourite to send.

- Send entries to: Cookbook Competition, Roslyn Deakin, PO Box 396, Croydon 3136.

- Entries must reach Roslyn by the last day of January 2004.

- Readers who have already sent gluten-free recipes to GR please choose your favourite to send separately to Roslyn.

#### **Win Buckets Of Herbs or Colour**

Seed company Mr Fothergill's, origina-

tors of the Bucket of Herbs and Bucket of Colour concept (see Round The Market Place GR 158), has generously sent samples of their products. There is a bucket (fashionably blue) propagating kit of sweet basil and one with a medley of annual flowers. Each kit contains the bucket, a seed mat, seed-raising mix and instructions.

Both buckets will go to the reader who sends in the best balcony gardening tip, to be judged by Megg and Mary.

- Send entries to: Bucket Competition, Grass Roots Publishing, PO Box 117, Seymour 3661.

Entries must arrive by the last day of January 2004. Entries arriving after this date will not be opened.

Winners of both competitions will be announced in GR 162, the April/May issue. ☘

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# A Gluten-Free Celebration

by Carol Cameron, Slade Point, Qld.

**You won't have to suffer a pain in the pinny this Christmas, the delicious recipes featured here are gluten-free or can be adapted to your needs. Of course if you eat too much . . .**

After reading the request for gluten-free Christmas recipes in GR 159 I have been busy trying out a few different recipes. I have found that the best gluten-free flour is FG Roberts brand made by Soy Products (Sales) Pty Ltd. This flour does not need to be sifted and I add it straight from the packet. Rice Cookie biscuits (used in miniature puddings) are the only special dietary food made by Arnotts. When adapting recipes I mainly substitute gluten-free flour for the wheat flour and soya margarine or Nuttex for the butter. I don't like chocolate, so I either leave that out or use a substitute such as coconut milk powder. For breadcrumbs, I substitute rice crumbs or corn flake crumbs.

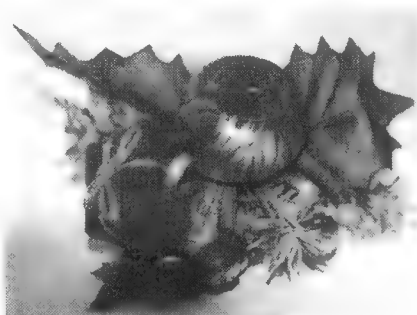
## ALMOND SHORTBREAD

220 g soya margarine  
1/2 cup caster sugar  
1 tsp almond essence  
1 cup SR flour (gluten-free)  
1 cup plain flour (gluten-free)  
cherries and almonds for decoration  
Cream margarine, sugar and almond essence. Add flours. Press into greased tin to 1 cm thickness. Mark into squares with a knife and put 1/2 cherry or 1/2 almond on each square. Sprinkle lightly with extra sugar. Bake in a slow oven at 150° C for 40 minutes. Re-mark squares and cool in tray.

## CHRISTMAS BOILED FRUIT CAKE

### Step 1

375 g packet mixed fruit  
200 g raisins, sultanas or other dried fruit  
1/2 cup nuts (raw almonds, pecans, walnuts), optional  
1 tsp mixed spice  
1 tsp cinnamon  
1 tsp ginger  
1 tsp nutmeg  
1 tsp bicarb soda  
1 cup sugar



1 cup sherry or water  
150 g soya margarine

### Step 2

2 eggs, beaten  
1 cup marmalade  
1 cup SR flour (gluten-free)  
1 cup plain flour (gluten-free)

Put all the first ingredients in saucepan to heat until boiling, reduce heat and simmer on low heat for 30 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool. When cool add beaten eggs, marmalade and flours. Pour into microwave dish sprayed with canola oil spray and cook in microwave on medium for 20 minutes. Remove from microwave and let stand for 10 minutes. Remove from dish.

Variations: If you wish you can place whole almonds in the bottom of the microwave dish before adding the cake mixture, so when you turn the cake out it is decorated with the almonds, or you can put icing on it, or you can drizzle a capful of either brandy or rum onto the cake and have no decoration before placing in a container.

## MINIATURE CHRISSIE PUDDINGS

2 packets Rice Cookie biscuits, crushed  
1 jar Robertson's fruit mince  
60 g butter, melted  
2 tbsp coconut milk powder or cocoa  
2 tbsp brandy  
Mix all ingredients together and

mould into small Christmas puddings. Make them the size of rum balls. For icing: 500 g icing sugar mixed with the juice from 1 small lemon. Dribble a little white icing over the top and decorate with small piece of red cherry and green jelly leaves. Can make up to 50 depending on the size of puddings.

Note: Your choice to use coconut milk powder or cocoa depends on your taste.

## MICROWAVE CHRISSIE PUDDING

### Step 1

1/2 cup prunes, chopped  
1/2 cup raisins  
1/2 cup currants  
1/2 cup dried apricots, chopped  
1/4 cup glacé cherries  
1/2 cup pecans, chopped  
1/2 cup brandy  
1/2 cup orange juice

Combine all above and soak fruit overnight.

### Step 2

2 cups rice crumbs  
1 cup SR flour (gluten-free)  
1/4 cup brown sugar  
1 tsp baking powder  
1 tsp nutmeg  
1 tsp mixed spice

### Step 3

1/3 cup melted soya margarine

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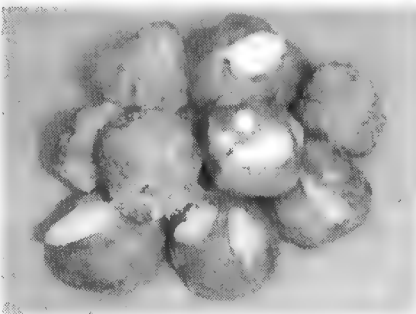
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- 3 tbsp golden syrup
- 1 tbsp Parisian essence
- grated rind lemon and orange
- 4 eggs, beaten

Mix dry ingredients together, add to the presoaked mixture. Add remaining ingredients until completely mixed together.

Line a microwave jug with an oven bag. Use large size oven bag and cut down to size. Fold bag over the side of the jug while cooking. Elevate on stand or upside down bowl in the microwave oven and microwave for 12 minutes on medium. Remove from microwave and allow to cool. When cool, take out of jug, tie up the bag and keep in the refrigerator.

Before eating, reheat single serves of pudding on high for 2 minutes in microwave. Serve with custard made of soya or goat milk.



### APRICOT BALLS

- 100 g pitted prunes
- 75 g dried apricots
- 45 g raisins
- 1/4 cup orange flavoured liqueur or orange juice
- 2 tsp finely grated orange rind
- 125 g desiccated coconut
- 90 g chopped almonds

Place prunes, apricots and raisins in a bowl, pour over liqueur or orange juice and mix to combine. Set aside to macerate for 1 hour. Place fruit mixture in a food processor and process to finely chop.

Transfer fruit mixture to a bowl; add orange rind, 75 g of the coconut and the almonds and mix to combine.

Form fruit mixture into small balls, adding a little more liqueur or orange juice if necessary. Roll balls in the remaining coconut to coat. Place on a plate lined with plastic food wrap, cover and chill until firm. Makes approximately 30.

### FRUITY GINGER BALLS

- 1/4 cup chopped dried apricots
- 1/4 cup chopped dried apples
- 1/2 cup chopped pitted prunes
- 2 tsp chopped glacé ginger
- 2 tbsp coconut milk powder
- 1 tbsp corn syrup
- 2 tsp brandy
- 10 flaked almonds, toasted

Combine fruit, ginger, coconut milk powder, syrup and brandy in bowl. Roll rounded teaspoons of mixture into balls with slightly wet hands. Top each ball with a flaked almond.

### COLD CHRISTMAS PUDDING

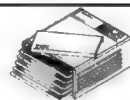
- 125 g sultanas
- 125 g dried apricots, finely chopped
- 125 g prunes, chopped
- 125 g currants
- 1 cup unsweetened orange juice
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 2 tbsp dry sherry
- 425 g cold cooked apple
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1/2 cup unsweetened apple juice
- 2 tbsp gelatine
- 1/4 cup boiling water

Combine fruit, orange juice, mixed spice and sherry in a saucepan. Slowly bring to the boil. Simmer for 3 minutes. Remove from heat and fold through apple. Combine lemon juice and apple juice. Dissolve gelatine in boiling water and add to apple and lemon juice. Pour over fruit and apple mixture and mix well. Spoon into a 6-cup capacity pudding mould. Cover and refrigerate overnight or longer. Use a sharp knife to slice into portions.

Note: I used freshly squeezed orange juice and apple juice in this recipe, but you could use bought apple juice. 🍷

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# Belties Are Beautiful

by Ken Moore, Glamorganvale, Qld.

Australian landholders are fortunate in having myriad cattle breeds to choose from – large, medium and miniature cattle; dairy, beef and dual purpose; popular and minority breeds; stock with recent or ancient origins. Choosing the breed best suited to your requirements takes a great deal of consideration and a good knowledge of the breeds that are available.

The Belted Galloway (Beltie) is one of the minority beef breeds in Australia. Most Belties are in the cooler parts of Australia, especially NSW, Victoria and SA, but there are increasing numbers in northern Australia. My herd of Belties does not seem to be stressed by the hot summers of south-east Queensland.

Belties come in three basic colours: black, the most common; the uncommon dun (brown); and the rare red. What distinguishes Belties from all other breeds is their white belt, which completely encircles the stomach between the front and hind legs. It is this belt that makes the animal so distinctive and draws admiring looks wherever they graze. On several occasions at my property I have seen cars stop and back up in order to get a better look at the herd.

Ancient origins in hilly country in south-west Scotland have conferred several natural advantages on the breed – a long winter coat (which is largely shed in summer), hardiness and a good foraging ability in rough conditions. The breed is also noted for freedom from calving difficulties.

Belties are not large – the standard animal is of medium size with short legs. A delightful miniature breed is also available. Because of their size Belties are ideal for smallholdings and hobby farms such as mine.

All animal breeders will know that there are advantages in having quiet and safe animals. When handled gently Belties are placid; my cattle follow me around, and try to lick me as a sign of cattle friendship. All Belties are polled



Ken Moore is enthusiastic about the qualities of Belted Galloways that make them an ideal breed for smallholders.

(without horns), a very good safety factor.

As with all breeds, those who wish to become serious breeders or to exhibit their animals at agricultural shows can establish a stud. Stud breeding is more onerous than breeding commercial stock, but will result in more valuable animals. Several associations exist for Beltie breeders.

There is no such thing as the one best breed of cattle – there are only appropriate breeds for the circumstances.

Those looking for a large beef breed will not find it in the Beltie. Landholders, especially those on smallholdings, looking for a quiet and safe beef breed might find the Beltie very suitable. Those searching for a breed that is spectacularly attractive around their property will undoubtedly find the Beltie to their liking.

Most breeders are biased towards their particular breed. I think that Belties are beautiful. ♡

# Belted Galloway Profile

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

Belties are a member of the Galloway family, but are managed as a separate breed and have their own breed society. They share the same characteristics as solid coloured Galloways: they are low maintenance, adaptable, quiet when handled regularly, and efficient converters of poor grazing into meat. Longevity is another shared attribute, along with ease of calving and good mothering. Belties carry the poll factor and pass it on to offspring when used in cross breeding.

Ever stroked a Beltie? Like Highland cattle, they have a double coat. The Scottish breeds developed this unique coat to cope with icy cold conditions. It's made of long outer hairs that shed rain and fall out in summer and a short dense undercoat that keeps the beasts warm and reduces the need for laying down excess subcutaneous fat. Belties, Galloways and Highlands all produce a lean carcass as a result of this.

The origin of Belties is lost in the

mists of time, but it's believed they developed from one of the small-bodied Highland breeds that had been known in Scotland for centuries. The distinct white belt purportedly derived from introductions of Dutch dairy breed the Lakenvelder, as it's an unusual feature and one not found on any British breeds. The fact that Belties were a crofter's house cow in centuries past adds support to this theory. The most fascinating historical snippet has to be the use of a few head of the breed among the large herds of black- or brindle-coated cattle that were driven to London each year from Scotland. The Belties were included because the white belt was discernable in the moonlight and meant the drovers could see where the stock were wandering.

## BREED FACTS

- Available as standard size or miniatures, weights are in the range of 900 – 1000 kilograms for mature bulls and 550

– 600 for mature cows. Birth weight on average is around 30 kilograms. Miniatures weigh 500 – 600 kilograms for bulls and 300 – 400 for cows, and calves around 18 – 20 kilograms.

- Belties thrive in wet weather and will graze all day whereas other breeds limit time spent in rain and seek some form of shelter.

- Don't assume this breed is solely a cold climate bovine – Belties are currently kept up north and have adapted by grazing in the cooler parts of the day and shedding the thick outer coat. Precautions need to be taken for protection from ticks.

- The breed is particularly suited to small acreages. Stock don't need coddling, dehorning or any special care, they thrive on marginal country and because of their medium size a few more head can be run to the hectare than is the case with large-framed breeds. This can equate to more calves reared and so a good return.

- Because of their moderate size, Beltie bulls are useful for putting over dairy heifers, there being minimum incidence of calving problems.

- Extra information or membership details can be sourced from the Australian Belted Galloway Association Inc, Kiama Stud Registration Centre Ltd, PO Box 189, Kiama 2533, ph: 02-4232-3333, fax: 02-4232-3350, website: [www.beltedgalloway.com.au](http://www.beltedgalloway.com.au) 🐾



A Black Beltie heifer on dry country in Victoria. The breed is not only eye-catching but hardy and easy to manage.

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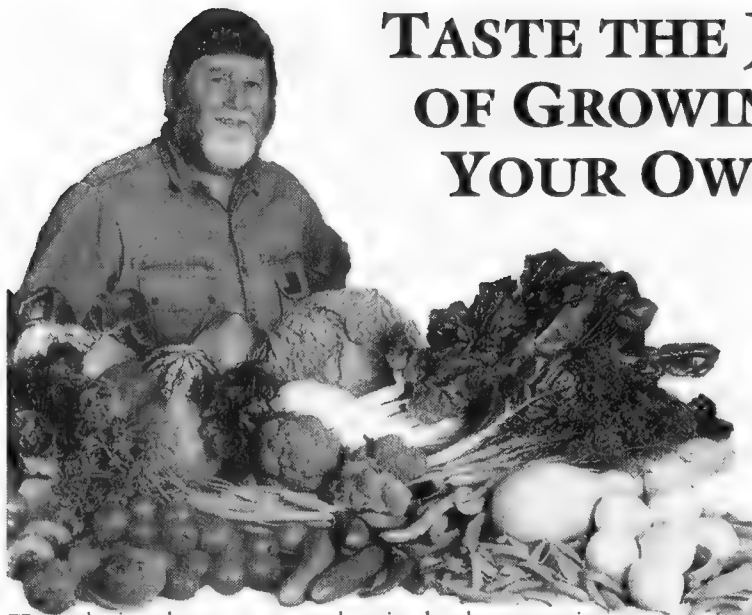
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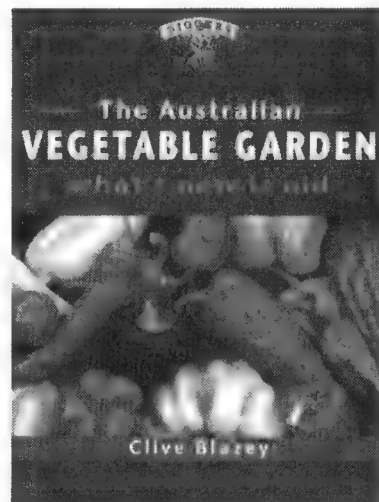
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# A Pretty Whimsy

by Robyn Leah, Weston, NSW.

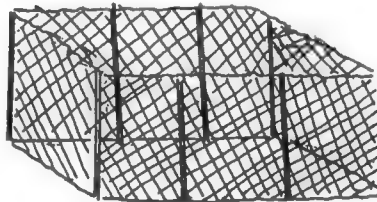
Anyone who ever wanted a wall of flowers or a living hedge in a hurry might like to try my invention. I designed it with the ladies in mind because we can't always dig post holes or saw timber when it comes to making garden borders and beds. It's an upright no-dig garden.

Materials required are a roll of chicken wire about one metre wide and some garden stakes, either metal or hardwood to prevent rotting. The garden wall of flowers or hedge can be made any height or length you fancy – I made mine one metre high by 30 centimetres wide and two metres long.

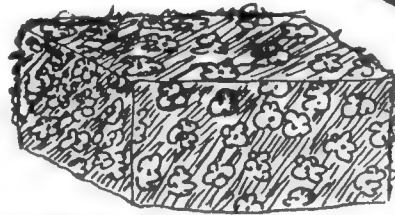
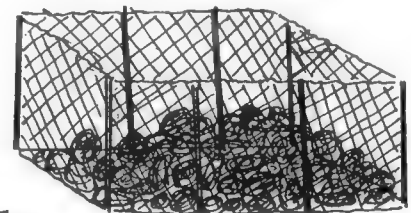
First, hammer the garden stakes into the ground in two rows, spacing them about 60 centimetres apart with about 30 centimetres between the rows. You decide what size and spacing you want. Next, completely wrap the chicken wire around the stakes. This will give you a wire frame. Secure the wire to the stakes.

Now you are ready to fill the frame. Choose solid filling for the lower two-thirds to support the wire and keep it taut: rocks, bricks or rubble and heavy garden soil will do. Next, top it up with compost. Heavy soil in the lower two-thirds will stop the soil level from dropping too, as it won't compost down like grass clippings and other organic material would. Stakes should be level with top of soil.

Wrap wire netting around stakes.



Fill the netted frame with rocks, bricks, rubble and heavy soil.



Plant a creeper, or vigorous herb like mint that will grow along sides and on top.



Robyn started her garden by putting the 'bones' in place first, as shown here, then adding touches like the pretty whimsy.

Now you are ready to plant. Assuming you have made a flower wall you can now plant any small annual such as marigold and alyssum. Ajuga makes a good covering. You can plant on both sides of the wall. Why not plant herbs one side, flowers the other?

For a hedge, either low or high, use ivy or any suitable creeper such as a

rose, ground cover or even mint. Your wall will soon be covered, giving the impression of a hedge.

Face your wall to suit the flowers you wish to grow. You can plant species that like shade one side and sun loving annuals the other. It is a pretty whimsy and can be used for practical purposes such as dividing gardens, or just to look at. ♡

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# TOP WATER SAVING TIPS

by Mary Horsfall, Euroa, Vic.

## Fifteen simple ways to conserve water in the home, garden and farm.

Once you put your mind to it the ways of saving water in the home and garden and on the farm seem endless. Whether you want to make major infrastructure changes, or experiment with some of the numerous inexpensive gadgets available these days, or prefer an inventive DIY approach, everyone can do something to conserve this most crucial resource. The 10 top tips I intended to compile for this article became 15 before I'd even started looking.

### IN THE GARDEN

The average household uses between 30 and 50 percent of all its water consumption on the garden, so the potential for savings here is enormous.

#### Reuse Greywater

The simplest way of using greywater is to keep a large bowl or bucket in each sink and basin and empty it on the garden when it's full. Some people are keen enough to collect shower water in the bathtub and bucket it out to the garden. There are, of course, purpose-designed greywater systems; I'll go into more detail about these later.

Greywater will inevitably be contaminated with soaps and detergents and whatever else is washed down the drain, so choose cleaning products carefully, avoid using chlorine bleaches and don't wash fats and oils down the sink because they clog the soil. Remember that most soap powders are alkaline, so avoid using greywater on azaleas and other acid-loving plants. Alternate clean water with greywater. Use greywater on ornamental gardens and fruit trees rather than on the vegie garden and, in particular, ensure it does not splash onto leaves of edible plants.

#### Mulch, Mulch and More Mulch

Mulch saves water in three ways. First, it reduces evaporation from garden beds by up to 70 percent, depending on the type of mulch, how deep it is and



how frequently it is applied. Second, it encourages a wide range of soil and surface organisms that are active beneath it. These tunnel into the soil leaving channels that allow water to penetrate to deeper levels, encouraging deeper root growth and making plants less dependent on surface water. Third, the mulch itself, and the bodies and wastes of all the soil and surface biota, gradually decompose and are incorporated into the soil, making it more absorbent.

#### Select Species To Suit

Spend some time researching the species that suit your area, both the broad geographical and climatic zone you live in and the smaller microclimates within your garden.

There are plants that suit every niche and time spent in observation and study before planting will often prevent expensive and heartbreaking losses and reduce your water consumption. Ask neighbours (or look over fences as you walk around), local nurs-

ery staff, environment groups, garden clubs and councils. Be aware that while many indigenous species will survive extended dry periods, the survival strategy of others is to set seed for future regeneration and then die.

#### Water Efficiently

There are so many watering options there is no excuse for the still too frequently seen fine sprinkler spray that waters the driveway and footpath, or is blown aloft in the wind. Choose sprinklers that suit the shape of the area to be watered and that produce large drops rather than a fine mist. Drippers, microsprays, and soaker or seepage hoses are more efficient than overhead sprinklers. Tubes or pipes inserted into the ground around trees to the appropriate depth of the root zone can be filled with water that will go directly to where it is needed.

#### Design Cleverly

Use canny design ideas to reduce water use considerably. Group plants with similar water needs together. Use taller plants to shade smaller ones and ground covers to insulate the soil. Areas shaded by fences and buildings are good spots for more delicate plants, especially if the structure also gives protection from drying winds. Plant along path edges to take advantage of any water runoff. Incorporate the permaculture concept of swales along the contour of a sloping garden. Reduce or eliminate lawn areas in your garden design.

### IN THE HOME

The hardest thing to change is our own habits – taps left running while brushing teeth, long gushing showers and full bathtubs are luxuries we can seldom afford. With a mindset reprogrammed to permanent water conservation mode there are many household changes, both big and small, that can be made.

### Be Toilet Wise

Nearly 20 percent of household water goes down the toilet, so potential savings here are large. Dual-flush toilet cisterns are essential in new buildings, but there is an inexpensive toilet flow controller that can be fitted to old single-flush cisterns to make their water use equivalent to that of a dual-flush unit.

Depending on your circumstances, a composting toilet (such as Clivus Multrum or Rotaloo) or an evaporation/dehydration system (such as Enviro Loo), though expensive initially, saves a great deal of water over time.

Of course, in our own homes there is always the option of 'if it's yellow let it mellow, if it's brown flush it down'.

### Install Rainwater Tanks

Tanks are available in a range of sizes, shapes and colours to suit most situations. There is even a bladder-type tank that will fit neatly under a deck or verandah; it's more expensive than the same size conventional tank, but is worth considering where space or aesthetics are prime considerations.

### Invest In A Greywater System

One of the many purpose-designed greywater systems will be a major infrastructure investment for any household. The Wattworks system (described in Round The Market Place GR 159) uses bath and shower water to flush the toilet and self-empties every 24 hours (meets EPA requirements) to either the septic/sewer or a garden watering system. This can reduce average household water use by 20 percent, if only used in the toilet, or more if it's also used in the garden. There are other waste water treatment systems available, including the Aqua Clarus unit (Round The

Market Place GR 159), the Envirocycle, the Septech Turbojet and the Clearwater Sewage treatment system.

Another option, less expensive, for reusing greywater is a reedbed filtration system.

### Shower Low-Flow

There are numerous water-saving shower heads available and they can use as little as 7.5 litres a minute, compared to as much as 25 litres a minute for a conventional shower head. A deluxe model, costing less than \$100, has six different spray settings and should satisfy those who complain that 'you can't get wet under those things'.

### Go-Go Gadgets

A look around any big hardware or plumbing supply store will uncover a multitude of nifty water-saving gadgets. If you do nothing else to conserve water, have a play with some inexpensive gadgets. 'Toys' available include greywater diverter valves, a toilet flow controller, water-saver sink nozzles, a water level alarm that can be set to the desired bath or laundry trough level and a shower timer that also lets you calculate water use and savings.

### ON THE FARM

Most of the ideas already mentioned are just as relevant, if not more so, to farming families as they are to everyone else, but farms have some special needs and, because of their size alone, are often in a position to make huge water savings.

### Irrigate Efficiently

It's beyond the ability of individual farmers to do anything about the major infrastructure (and costs) involved in converting open irrigation channels to more efficient pipelines, or about what seems to me to be the fundamentally flawed policy that allows water traders with no interest in the land or the environment to buy and sell water rights as a purely money-making venture. These issues need to be addressed at government level. However, there is still huge potential for increased water conservation in some irrigation areas and advice is available from the appropriate irrigation authority.

It seems unbelievable, but is true, that flood irrigation is still being used inappropriately in some places, for

example to water orchard trees, when drippers, or microsprays on sandy soil, would be a far more efficient method.

### Minimise Evaporation

Bare soil is not only at risk of being eroded, but also is fully exposed to water loss through evaporation. Every effort needs to be made to keep soil covered by crops, pasture, stubble or mulch. A farm design incorporating trees in windbreaks or biolinks will reduce evaporation by allowing shade to fall on pasture. Farm areas protected by windbreaks have a 20 to 30 percent higher yield than do unprotected areas and sheltered pastures lose 12 millimetres less water than do open pastures during the spring growing season (DNRE figures).

### Reuse Waste Water

Waste water from farming operations such as dairying or piggeries can be reused, with appropriate environmental safeguards, to water crops, pasture or the farm garden.

### Maintain Infrastructure

It sounds almost too simple to mention, but repairing leaks and seepage problems in dams, pipes, pumps and other water infrastructure can save thousands of litres that can be put to good use elsewhere on the property.

### Protect Waterways

Prevent stock access to dams and waterways on the property to maintain water quality. Plant appropriate native species to shade dams and waterways, prevent erosion and keep riparian areas healthy for long-term sustainability.

### More Information

Previous issues of *Grass Roots* have featured articles on various aspects of using and saving water; in particular GR 155 has several relevant articles, GRs 143 and 144 explain swales and GR 146 describes how one dairying family reuses waste water. See also GRs 142, 137, 136, 121, 118 and 117.

Your local water authority might be able to provide you with a household water audit kit to help you work out how much water the family uses per day and where savings can be made.

Take a look at this website that lists, among other relevant information, distributors of useful water-saving goodies: [www.greenenvironmenteffects.com.au/pages/distributors2.html](http://www.greenenvironmenteffects.com.au/pages/distributors2.html) 🌱



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# Dolls For All Ages

by Jose Robinson, Noosaville, Qld.

With Christmas just around the corner it's an ideal time to get started on the happy craft of rag doll making. If you can use a sewing machine, you can make these dolls. They make excellent Christmas presents for children, and even for retired children like me. It's also a fun craft to teach to older children and share with them during the school holidays.

My mum was a clever dressmaker and taught me at a very early age to make my own dolls' clothes on her old Singer treadle sewing machine. This machine had a detachable handle that allowed me to use the treadle machine before my legs were long enough to reach the pedals. This was before Barbie dolls were around, but I think my dolls had a far more extensive wardrobe of fashionable outfits than Barbie. My doll clothes collection was

larger than that of any other kid in my district. I used to love playing laundry day and I'd peg them out on my own little clothesline to dry.

Recently, more than half a century later, I once again became enthralled with rag doll making and the long-legged, country-style Raggedy Anne dolls are my specialty. These dolls look great hanging from wardrobe doors or from hooks on the wall, or sitting on a bench or bed. You don't need to be a child to enjoy these cuties, you just need to be young at heart.

I'll set out my very easy pattern for the body, arms and legs. It can be cut smaller or larger as required. Then you simply make the clothes to fit your size doll.

If you have bags of scrap fabric stowed away somewhere in a cupboard, use that. If not, craft shops sell small

pieces suitable for patchwork, which will do the job. Op shops are a good source of cheap, almost-new garments you can cut up. Often you can find short lengths of new fabric, not big enough for anything but doll clothes.

## MATERIALS

- calico or similar for body (about half a metre)
- stuffing (wadding or polyester)
- fabric for dress (half a metre)
- small buttons
- cotton, string or similar for shoe laces

## INSTRUCTIONS

Finished height is 50 centimetres.

To cut out body, legs and arms, fold calico in halves. Trace around the body pattern and then legs and arms. Cut on the double so you have two of each. Leave openings as marked. Stitch and turn these shapes. Clip into the seam allowance at curves and turn inside out.

Stuff the arms and legs to the filling line. Keep the seam lines of the arms and legs towards the front and back, then stitch across the line. The top of the legs and arms above the stuffing line should be ironed flat. This section remains unstuffed as this gives the arms and legs their flexibility to move easily in all directions. Pin legs inside the lower edge of the body front.



Rag dolls were a source of pleasure for Jose when she was a child and she's having fun decades later making them.

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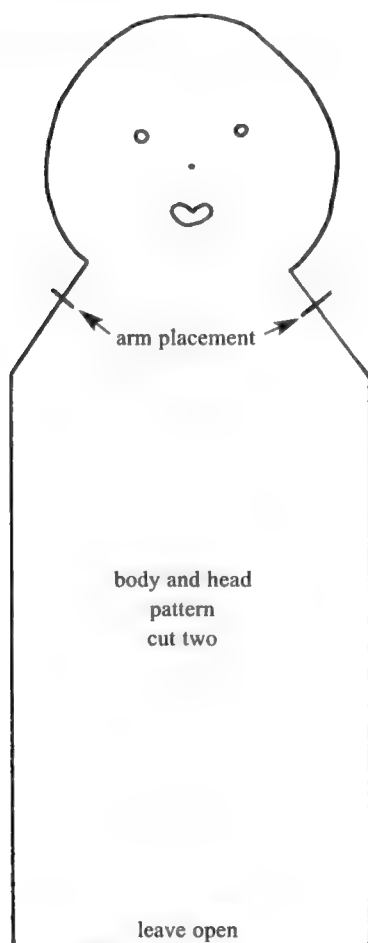


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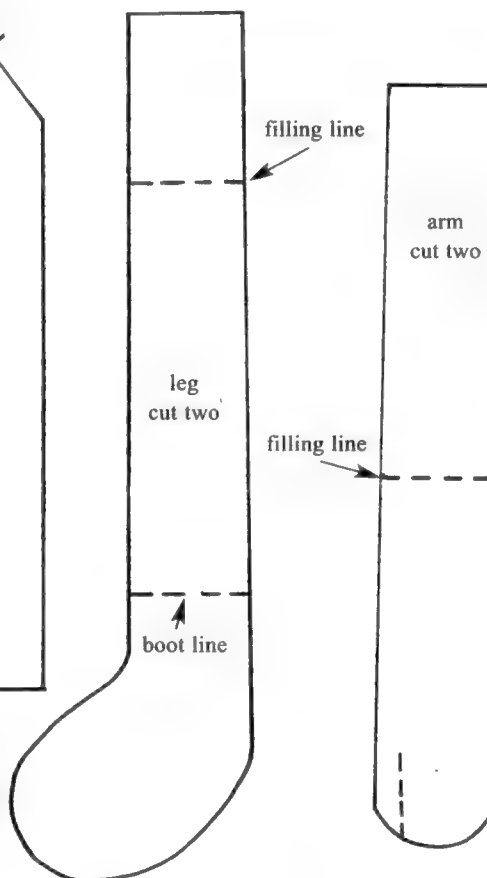
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### Doll Pattern

Enlarge by 210% and leave extra for seam allowance.



When stitched, the body measures 28 cm tall, the legs are 26 cm long and the arms are 23 cm.



The next step is to stuff the head and body. Taking only a small amount of stuffing at a time, use a dowel or stick to push the wadding or polyester up the body into the head. Make it very firm, especially at the neck. When full, turn in edges of lower body and stitch across both legs.

Insert the arms below each shoulder line and stitch in. Boots can be painted

on legs, using masking tape to mark top edge.

For the clothing, cut out a paper pattern of the kind of clothing you want for the doll. Test the pattern on the doll, then cut out in fabric and stitch. Offcuts of laces and ribbons help to pretty it up.

Last but not least, we need to consider facial features and hair. For the 'hair', I usually scrunch up wool or jute strands, and either make it into plaits with ribbon bows or short straight hair with a fringe. Lay the hair in a central position across a short length of narrow tape and stitch a line to hold it together. Now place this on the doll's head and sew it on. The 'hair' can then be either trimmed into a short cut or plaited and tied with two bows. Even a ponytail can look good. Sometimes I make a little hat or bonnet to sit on the head.

For the facial features, you can buy ready-made moving eyes at most craft shops. Painted or embroidered eyes look good too. Just a black spot is good enough for a nose, or a french knot using black thread will do a nice job. The mouth can be tricky, but it is a very important part of the face because it can make or mar the facial expression. A rosebud-shaped mouth looks good on dolls and gives a cute expression. A rosebud mouth is shaped like a squashed heart.

Your long-legged Raggedy Anne doll is now ready to be giftwrapped to surprise your favourite recipient. ♡



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# First Aid For Bushwalkers

by Leah Broadby, Abels Bay, Tas.

Australia is a beautiful and diverse country, so it's not surprising that bushwalking is a favourite pastime of both Australians and foreign visitors. Though bushwalking is great exercise and can be very therapeutic, it is not without its hazards. Most keen bushwalkers will have experienced bites, stings, grazes or even more serious injuries such as broken bones. It's sensible to prepare yourself to be able to deal with these sorts of situations before venturing into the bush. Assemble and carry a first-aid kit, learn basic first-aid techniques, maybe even do a course. Leave details of your trip and estimated time of return with a responsible person who can alert authorities in case anything goes wrong. Carry a mobile phone if you'll be in an area where it will work. Unless you are very experienced, or following a well-beaten track, always walk with others. Having taken these precautions, you are ready to enjoy the great outdoors.

The following advice is for basic guidance only. I strongly recommend you read, and carry with you on extended walks, a first-aid manual.

## SNAKEBITE

In most cases you'll see the culprit. Sometimes, though, you might experience a sharp pain and notice two puncture marks at the spot.

### Symptoms

- Pallor, cool skin, sweating.
- Rapid weak pulse.
- Rapid shallow breathing or breathing difficulties.
- Difficulty in swallowing and speaking.
- Nausea, vomiting, headache.
- Drowsiness progressing to coma.

### Treatment

- Act as quickly as possible.
- Bandage firmly from fingers or toes up the whole limb towards the torso.
- Immobilise the limb with a splint.
- Keep patient resting, do not allow



Camping and bushwalking are fun with friends, though this group is more concerned with blister care than enjoying outdoor ambience.

them to walk or exert themselves.

- Seek medical assistance.

Don't wash the bite, as the venom identifies the snake and therefore the appropriate treatment upon getting medical help.

## FUNNEL-WEB SPIDER BITE

### Symptoms

- Tingling around the mouth, heavy sweating, twitching of muscles, stomach pain, heavy production of saliva and respiratory distress.

### Treatment

- Same as treatment for snake bite.

## REDBACK SPIDER BITE

### Symptoms

- Pain and heat on the bite, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, heavy sweating, swollen glands in armpits and groin area, pain in opposite limb.

### Treatment

- Place ice on area, monitor heart

rate and circulation.

- Get medical assistance.

## WHITE TAILED SPIDER BITE

### Symptoms

- Localised pain, swelling, an itchy lump, discolouration and redness and small localised ulcers. If left it tends to fester.

### Treatment

- Wash with soap and water, apply a cold compress and seek medical assistance.

All bites can lead to breathing and respiratory difficulties if allergies are present and medical assistance must be sought immediately. If you've seen your perpetrator, try to remember what it looks like for later description to the medical personnel.

## INSECT BITES

In most cases insect bites do not cause serious problems, but, once again, it



pays to be cautious because sometimes people don't know they've got an allergy until they get bitten three days into a bushwalk.

### Symptoms

Symptoms vary depending on the insect.

- Pain, small lump or swelling.
- Itching or stinging.
- Breathing difficulties and respiratory failure can result if there is a severe allergy.

### Treatment

- Antihistamine lotion or tablets to treat mild reactions. Tea tree oil and antihistamines help control itching.
- If you know you require a medication for an allergic reaction, make sure you carry it with you at all times as allergies represent the major danger of insect bites.

## BEE STING

### Symptoms

- Pain, swelling, itching.
- Severe allergic reaction can occasionally result in respiratory failure and cardiac arrest.

### Treatment

- Remove the sting by scraping it with a knife edge or fingernail.
- Apply a cold compress.
- Use antihistamine lotion or tablets, if available.
- If a severe allergy is occurring, apply pressure and immobilise the area (as for snakebite) and seek medical help immediately.

Don't squeeze the area around the sting as this only injects more venom into the person.

## BURNS

Campfires or gas or kerosene cooking

appliances can sometimes cause burns, especially in people who are not familiar with them.

### Symptoms

- The reflex action and pain upon touching a hot thing should probably be evident enough!
- Redness, swelling, blistering.

### Treatment

- Apply cold water as quickly as possible, fully immersing the burned area for at least 15 minutes.
- Remove any burnt clothing and jewellery unless it is stuck to the skin.
- Leave blisters intact.
- Cover with a clean nonadherent burn dressing.
- Seek medical advice.

Don't apply oil, butter or greasy ointments. They act like a locked door on the heat and can cause infection. Don't break blisters or remove any material that is stuck to the skin.

## TICKS

Ticks are little bead-sized creatures eager to take up residence around your or your children's groin and armpits. They're hard to see, so a thorough examination in these areas (as well as behind the ears and the back of the neck) at the end of each day is advisable.

### Symptoms

Symptoms usually occur gradually over several days, but quickly in the case of an allergy.

- Local irritation.
- Lethargy.
- Muscle weakness.
- Unsteady movement and double vision.
- Breathing or swallowing difficulties.

• Allergic reactions may include rapid local swelling, wheezing, breathing difficulties and collapse.

### Treatment

- Spray with tick repellent or swab with kerosene, tea tree oil or methylated spirit.
- Remove with tweezers by grabbing the tick as close as possible to where it is joined to the skin and pulling gently upwards, ensuring you do not leave the head.
- Wash the area thoroughly and apply antiseptic cream.
- Check the whole body for further ticks.
- Seek medical aid.

## LEECHES

If you're going walking in a rainforest, among fallen trees or near creeks, be aware that leeches have an almost supernatural ability to find blood. Even when you're within the protective confines of your tent, they will find their way to the inside of your fly and crawl around, just waiting for you to unzip that door. So, up with the socks, down with the trousers and on with the gaiters. Another preventative measure is to rub tea tree oil or insect repellent onto your skin.

### Symptoms

- A big black leech will be attached to your skin!
- Once the leech is off, there can be a fair amount of bleeding and eventually the area will become itchy.

### Treatment

- Sprinkle the leech with salt. It will curl up and drop off.
- Wash the area to remove the anticoagulant (the substance that stops the

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blood clotting).

- Apply a dressing until the bleeding stops.

Don't ever pull a leech off your skin as the anticoagulant remains where it was attached and you continue to bleed.

## BLEEDING

On every bushwalk you'll come across a miscellany of branches, twigs and thorns – all lying in patient readiness to rip open your skin at any opportunity. Is that putting a little too much blame on the vegetation? Well, we wouldn't want to put it down to our own clumsiness, would we?

### Symptoms

- There'll be a cut or scratch and probably some pain as well as bleeding.

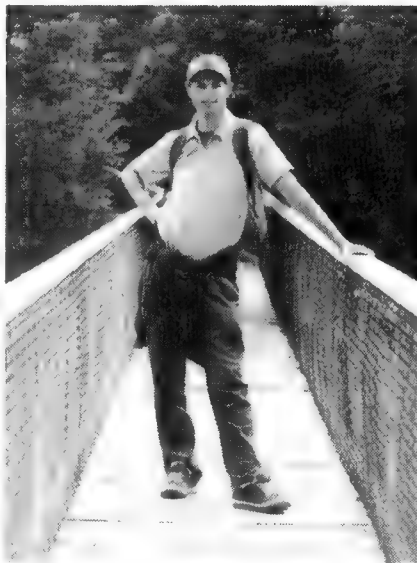
### Treatment

- Wear gloves when treating bleeding wounds.
- Wipe blood away to inspect wound.
- Apply direct pressure with bandage or piece of clothing.
- If blood soaks through, apply another bandage on top of the first one so as not to disturb the clotting process.
- Have the patient lie down and elevate the bleeding area above the heart, to reduce the flow.
- If the wound is still bleeding excessively, the situation must be reassessed because the wound could have been disturbed by the way it was bandaged. To do this the cloth must be removed, then reapplied with more care and pressure if necessary.

Do not use a tourniquet (a very tight band or cloth tied above the wound to stop circulation) unless everything else has failed and the patient's life is at stake as it can result in the patient losing the limb altogether.

## SPRAINS

For every twig waiting to puncture your skin, there is also an unforeseen dip in the path. Then there are the unpredictable gaps between rocks, holes cleverly disguised as solid ground by earth-hugging foliage, and gravel that's easier to slip on than ice. In the face of this unpredictable geological battle, sprained ankles are not uncommon.



A happy bushwalker carries a first-aid kit.

### Symptoms

- The sudden pain and inability to hold oneself up makes it fairly self-evident.
- Bruising, swelling, tenderness in the area.

### Treatment

- Rest the injury.
  - Apply ice or a cold compress for 10 minutes, or cold water if these are unavailable.
  - Support with a firm elastic bandage.
  - Elevate the limb.
- Avoid removing boots until the sprain can be treated.

## DEHYDRATION

Mild cases of dehydration are quite frequent, usually because body fluid lost through perspiration is greater than fluid intake. It pays to always be vigilant about water intake and to be well prepared with your water supplies, no matter where you are going. Don't rely on the creek marked on the map because creeks dry up.

### Symptoms

- Pale clammy skin.
- Rapid breathing.
- Profuse and prolonged sweating and thirst.
- Loss of skin elasticity.
- Sunken eyes in children.
- Prolonged dehydration can lead to shock and even death.

### Treatment

- Remove any unnecessary clothing.
- Complete rest in shade.
- Drink cool water.

## SIMPLE FRACTURE

Most falls are minor incidents resulting in nothing more than bruising or grazing, but sometimes fractures can occur.

### Symptoms

- Swelling around the affected area.
- Possible discolouration of skin.
- Tenderness in the area.
- Loss of mobility in the limbs.
- Sometimes the sound of the snapping bone is audible.

### Treatment

- Basic care relies on immobilisation and splinting of the injury. How you do this varies depending on which bone is fractured.
- Finger: strap broken finger to adjacent finger.
- Lower arm: splint entire forearm and immobilise in a sling.
- Upper arm: place arm in a sling and bandage upper arm to chest.
- Leg: splint leg or strap legs together if patient can be carried.
- You may need to pour your creative energies into making a splint. A straight piece of wood, rolled up newspaper, or even a blanket will do. The limb must be as immobile and as comfortable as possible.
- The splint must extend beyond both sides of the fracture
- If possible, carefully elevate the limb to slow blood flow to the wound.
- Seek medical assistance.

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# THE OPEN ROAD

## Structure For The Children

by Julia LeMonde, On The Road, Australia.

Taking a year of my life to explore Australia is a dream coming true for me. To place a pause on a familiar routine in search of an adventure, with no predictable outcome for each day, is an exciting and carefree prospect. It's all a little different, however, in reality, as a wife and mother to three children. Nevertheless, our family adventure has begun and we have gained some effective parenting strategies rather quickly in order for this experience to remain positive and fun.

As parents on the road, it is of paramount importance to provide structure for the children. Ours cope with each new day more easily if they have a clear understanding of where they are travelling to and how long they are going to be sitting in the van. We look at maps together and chart our travel. It also helps to give estimates of travel time and rest stops by using distances on our maps. There is security in knowing in general what is going to happen each day, and keeping the children informed and involved has worked well.

After attending many school outings as parent supervisor, I have realised how much more smoothly a day out can go when the children know what is expected of them and what the rules are. A few minutes spent before each outing makes all the difference. Some of our general rules are as basic as not going out of sight on a bushwalk, or keeping sunsafe and filling one's own drink bottle every morning. We can now ask if everyone is ready and our children know what is required before they can answer 'yes'.

One of the pitfalls I encountered early on in the trip was to presume that everyone had embraced my idea of how the trip would proceed. It was a shock to discover that my agenda wasn't necessarily that of any of the other



Fun at Townsville as the children take a break from school work on the road.

members of the family. For example, my playing the role of mother and that of home-schooling tutor for any spare time in between was not my twelve-year-old's idea of a great family experience. Leading on from the near mutiny I had on my hands, I now understand the importance of stepping out of those roles for some of the time and giving my darlings a break.

A consequence of home schooling has been that everyone can become too serious, as we get engrossed in following the curriculum. Having school-free days is as vital as having fun doing nothing but reflecting on the sunset. Scheduling time alone is hard, and parent-free time for the children too isn't easy to always achieve and can put a strain on our relationships. We each understand the importance of leaving someone to spend time alone doing whatever they want.

I've also realised the importance of involving the children in some of the decision-making throughout the trip. This is in turn rewarded with cooperation with tasks as well as confidence

in carrying them out. It is often as simple as a choice of two possibilities on a menu, or how to spend the afternoon. Children feel important enough to be involved and know that it is their trip too.

There are always unexpected pitfalls of travel such as rainy days, new leaks in the tent, sick travellers and cold weather. These are as much a part of the trip as the dust and flies. One trap we avoid is that of travelling for too long and trying to find a place to stay too late in the afternoon. By this time of day everyone's energy is sapped, and setting up camp and arranging a meal for hungry people at dusk is not worth the extra miles covered.

I admire the way our children have adapted to this new way of life. From their relatively powerless position, they have taken on the demands of this trip remarkably. Travelling with one's parents can't be easy.

With some clear guidelines in place, the joys of travelling as a family of five have outnumbered the trials. For us, the experience is well worth the effort. ♡

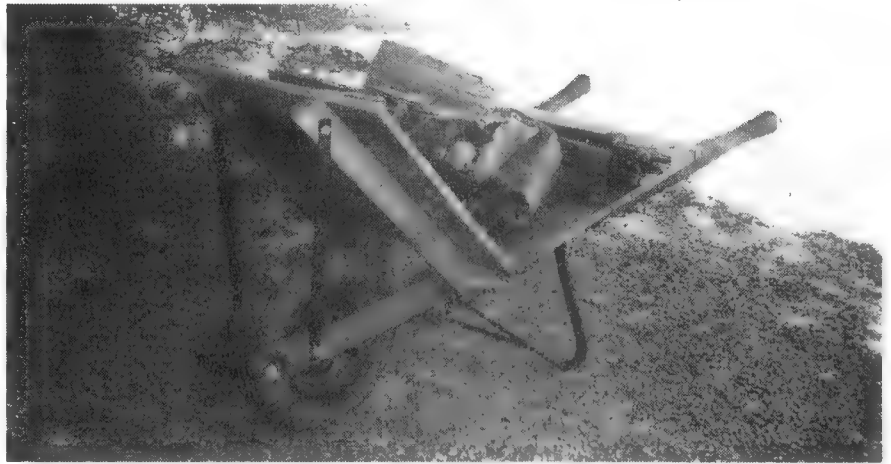
# Flat-Bed Barrow

by Jim Williams, Bullarto, Vic.

I'd always wanted a flat-bed wheelbarrow and no one seems to make them, so I made my own. The frame and wheel are from an old concreter's barrow, the bucket of which had rusted. Fortunately, the one I found at the tip had malleable steel front braces so I could hammer them straight. The bed is simply offcut hardwood boards screwed onto the frame.

The only hard part was making the wooden supports for the front. They had to be bevelled slightly so the boards would lie flat on them. Unfortunately, I had to replace all the old nuts and bolts as they were too badly rusted to be reused. One further refinement was to use some old plastic tubing to encase the axle ends so they would fit snugly under the steel supports.

This type of barrow has many more uses than the bucket type and is excellent



for carting firewood, bricks and very wide loads of brush and cuttings. The large pneumatic tyre makes using it in muddy or rough areas light work. I also take great delight in the fact that it's

almost entirely made from recycled materials. My next project is to build a Chinese type of barrow that has the wheel directly under the load and is open at the front to allow accurate dumping. ♻️

apples, bananas, cherries, dandelion, endive, figs, herbs, hummus, soyabeans, tea, soap, macadamias, garlic, chillies, lemon grass, pasta, cauliflowers, roses, broccoli, peas, rocket, lettuce, bokchoy, avocados, tomatoes, herbal extracts, massage oils, potatoes, carrots, cheese, jams, sauces, eggs, honey and more .....

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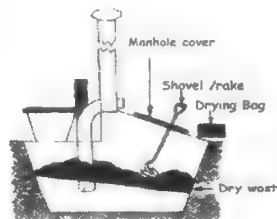


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# Chook Dome Blues

by Beth Montgomery, Wonthaggi, Vic.

Long ago I marvelled at the PVC piping chook dome design in *The Permaculture Home Garden* by Linda Woodrow. Some friends had copied the design to the letter, producing a splendid rigid structure complete with a sturdy roost. It was almost possible to stand upright inside it. The dome was such an innovative structure: cheap, strong, light and durable.

I decided to make a chook dome too. The only trouble was, my garden beds were smaller than Linda's. She had three-metre diameter beds, whereas mine were only two metres in diameter. Once I did the calculations I discovered I needed a lot less materials and my circumference was less, mine being just over seven metres while Linda's was almost 11 metres. I guessed that to make a base hoop of about seven metres was beyond the capability of the PVC piping she recommended. It simply wouldn't bend. So I bought thick black polypipe instead. It was a lot cheaper: 20 metres for less than \$5.

My plan was to have a dome with three crossover struts plus a smaller circle halfway up. I had a helpful tourist staying with me for a few weeks and he volunteered to build the dome. Unfortunately, a two-metre diameter dome is just big enough to make it

impossible to work on by yourself. As soon as he'd fixed one crossover bar in place, he'd work on the second, only to find the first flopping over to one side and pulling the overall shape askew. So, after a lot of colourful language, my volunteer gave up. He was due to leave that week anyway, but I always wondered if the chook dome blues had helped in his decision to move on.

Months went by and I decided to enlist the help of my dome building friends. We managed to drill holes in the crossovers and fasten the intersections with wire. But it ended up not sitting well. The whole thing lunged to one side as if it were spinally challenged. It was supple too. If you pushed it, it would yield like an air cushion.

Once the chicken wire cladding was on the whole thing seemed far more rigid. My friend sewed some old shadecloth on top that hid some of the structural blemishes, but it still looked all wonky.

The next step was to make a roost. I had some left over polypipe joined to make a small hoop. Next I found some old bits of timber and fixed them with wire to this hoop. The hoop was suspended from the apex of the dome with hay band. The roost seemed a bit heavy, but it held up well, at first.

The next morning I came out to see

that the whole structure had sunk in the middle like a giant soufflé. The roost had pulled the apex down to almost ground level. Here was a serious problem. I could imagine chooks roosting high at night and then finding themselves gently lowered to ground level by dawn. It would be like a chook elevator. I had to think of another strategy.

Bamboo seemed like the best idea. I found some lengths of bamboo from a heap of old tree guards and strung them, three together, to make wide strips across the hoop for roosting.

The next thing, of course, was to reinforce the apex. I had a stout piece of bamboo for this job, acting like a central tent pole. I hope this will stop the weight of the birds from pulling the dome down.

Finally, I had to make a door. I did this by sewing a lot of old shadecloth into a type of giant chute. It's big enough for me to climb in and out of and tricky to undo if you're a dog. To shut the chute, you simply tie it off with some hay band.

I bought a packet of tent pegs to attach the structure to the ground, again, less than \$5. So it's all ready now, wonky as it is. A wonder of modern engineering, constructed for less than \$20. All I need now is some chooks. 🐔



Anna testing out the shadecloth chute entrance to the chook dome.

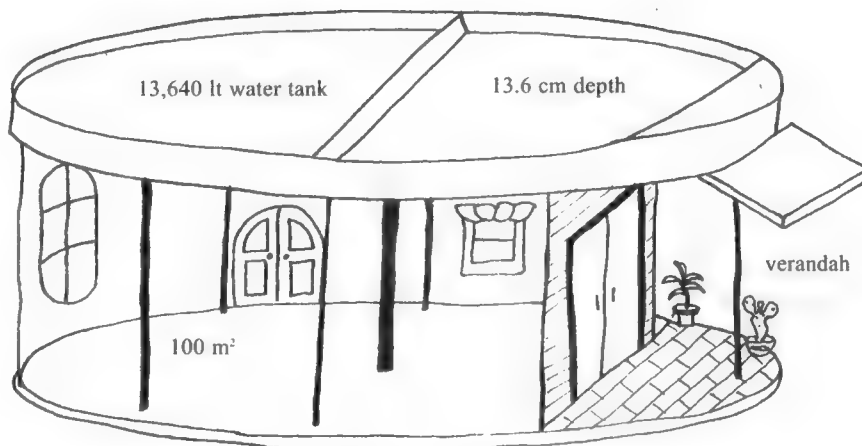


The chook dome made from polypipe covered in wire mesh.



# Bushfire-Proof Dwelling Concept

A super idea for a bushfire-proof dwelling comes from Dr Patrick Ffyske Howden, longtime proponent of all things sustainable and enviro friendly. He recommends a tank house having rainwater storage on the roof. The water in the rooftop tank can be used to spray the house during a bushfire; it also acts as temperature insulation, can provide drinking water if suitably sealed, or can even be used as a swimming pool. In the example given, a 13,640 litre tank on top of a house of 100 square metres would need to be 13.6 centimetres deep. The load stress in this application is 136.4 kilograms per square metre.



More details of this idea are available in Dr Ffyske Howden's book, *How To Live*

— *Free At Last*, a two-disk version of which is available for \$10 from: BackYard

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# Special Christmas Spirit

by Julia LeMonde, Sunshine Plaza, Qld.

As Christmas approaches each year, and as I get older, I find myself more in control and less at the mercy of outside forces when it comes to coping with the season. I can still recall patiently standing in a long queue so that my first-born could be photographed on Santa's knee. After waiting an eternity my toddler was whisked on and off a bored looking Santa quicker than it takes to say 'here's your receipt'.

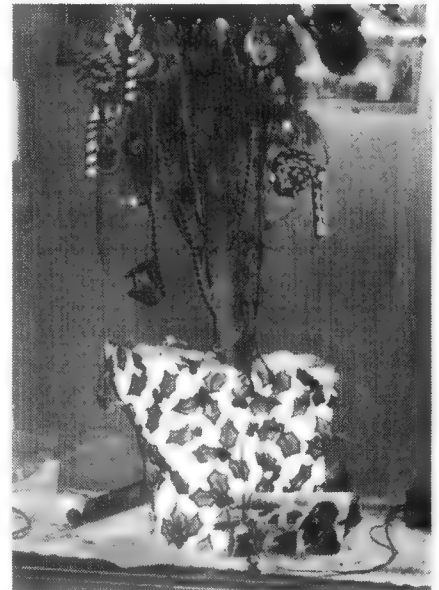
This experience was one of a series that left me less than satisfied with the commercial concept of Christmas. Take for example the times that I have spent running around frantically spending all my money and more on expensive presents I couldn't really afford, while trying to fulfil all predetermined Christmas obligations and expectations. This peculiar habit has taken many years to stamp out.

## IGNORE THE ADVERTISING

Despite the potential pressure build-up and threat to the finances, I have found that there are ways to make Christmas

and the lead-up to it more enjoyable. First and foremost on my Christmas list of things to do is to ignore the advertising ploys urging me to buy consumer goods. These campaigns to snare all my money start creeping into letter boxes and television programs, and at any other opportunity, as soon as there is the slightest hint that the Christmas season is approaching.

Another major stress factor of years gone by was having to choose and buy a huge variety of appropriate presents for everyone my husband and I were related to. Raising a family on a tight income and fulfilling these expectations had become a financial headache for us and counterproductive in this 'season of goodwill'. We eventually told extended family members that we were unable to buy them all presents any longer and that we too no longer expected them. This break with the gift-giving tradition was welcomed and accepted and has made it a lot easier for us all to have a more relaxing pre-Christmas period. This leaves us extra



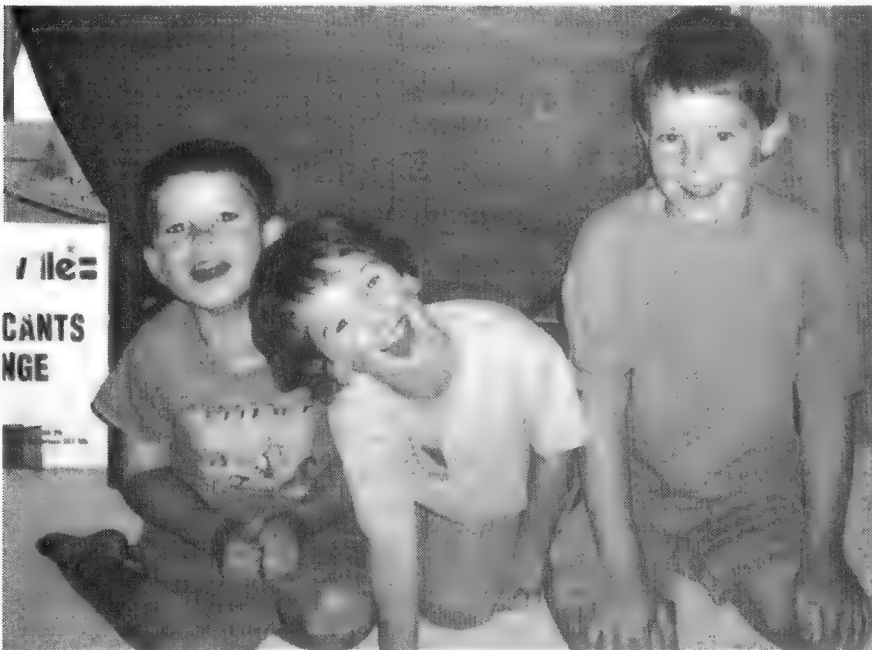
A branch of pine decorated with bits and pieces made by the children.

dollars to spend on our children, food and the celebrations.

## PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT

One of the important things, I feel, is to not let lack of spare cash stop our family from experiencing the fun of a big celebration such as Christmas. For this reason I keep an eye out for free entertainment that is often available around this time of year. There are fireworks displays staged for the general public at various locations and the large shopping centres sometimes provide activities such as wandering carollers and clowns to entertain the crowds for nothing.

I grew up in Sydney and can remember being taken as a child to visit the mechanical shop window displays in the big city department stores, as well as wandering through the expensively decorated streets and malls. Last year our family travelled an hour to Brisbane where we were rewarded with a fantastic entertainment package called 'The Singing Christmas Tree' at Southbank. We



The children help with preparing for our Christmas and love the family traditions.

watched a wonderful performance, complete with international singers and local performers alongside donkeys and elaborately decorated camels in the nativity procession, all for the cost of a gold coin donation. In past years and other towns we have stopped to watch 'Santa parades' and various other street processions that have entertained us. Combined with a picnic hamper from home, this makes a great day out. Just participating in events that draw crowds can make us feel a part of any community and its festivities.

Living in proximity to a large town last year meant that we were able to take the children on a drive-by and view the houses that have turned Christmas lighting into an art form. The local newspaper published a list of houses that were decorated and we organised a circuit and drove around one evening gathering Christmas spirit.

Carols by candlelight are a magical event. As well as focusing on the real reason Christmas exists, it gives some of us (me!) a chance to join in on communal singing with gay abandon. When we lived in rural New Zealand a local would hold Christmas carols in his hay barn for anyone who wished to come, complete with the bleats of nearby sheep and aroma of hay bales.

If there are lots of parties and end-of-year celebrations to attend, all the better. I feel there aren't enough excuses to celebrate and enjoy the company of others while feasting continuously for a while. Then there are those special end-of-year school performances in which gorgeous young family members participate – certainly worth taking an afternoon off to watch.

## FAMILY ACTIVITIES

With a family to raise, a number of ideas have helped in the lead-up to Christmas. The children make all the Christmas decorations and we usually have a real tree branch, which releases the beautiful scent of pine throughout the house. As long as I have plenty of glue, glitter and recycled supplies, along with some craft books from the library, everyone manages to find something interesting to make. Our children's old paintings make good wrapping paper and end up compostable, while pillowcases make good Christmas stockings. I usually play a variety of Christmas music for atmosphere when we are all busy making decorations.

Preparation for any event is half the fun in our house and baking takes on the importance it deserves. Cookbooks from the library have been useful and we never tire of trying something a little more ambitious at this time of year. Table decorations are another favourite in our house. The children love placing candles and pine cones and dried flowers into oasis or playdough to make a table arrangement.

My Hungarian family has always celebrated on Christmas Eve, so I have kept this tradition alive and we have a hot meal then, with picnic food outdoors somewhere the next day. Barbecues, picnics and camp-overs are great ways to have fun without spending much money. Children love sleeping outside in a tent with their friends. Provide a few torches and batteries, hot popcorn and midnight snacks for a cheap way to have fun over the Christmas holidays.

## SHARING AND GIVING

Regardless of spiritual affiliations, Christmas is a huge celebration in this country and there are many ways to embrace the concept of sharing and giving. On Christmas day there is no unwritten rule in our family that says relations only. We don't live close to extended family and have in the past befriended others in the same situation. As a result we have had some wonderful combined picnics with friends from overseas and newcomers to our country. The main objective is to find somewhere relaxing and just have fun together enjoying good food and some outdoor activities. The sharing of time and fun is the part of Christmas we

have adopted wholeheartedly, with advertisers and merchants hardly getting a look in these days.

A few years ago an English friend, Pam, brought a lovely summer pudding to our combined Christmas picnic, and, while one of her backpacker guests also contributed a delicious homemade traditional pudding his mother had sent from Devon, Pam's cool summer pudding was a refreshing addition on a hot Christmas Day.

However we celebrate Christmas, as our family multiplies, it has been the simple things that have made this time of year memorable and fun for all of us. Making a conscious effort to eliminate the stressful aspects the 'festive' season has resulted in end-of-year preparations and celebrations that our whole family is involved with. These days celebrating Christmas gives me a freedom of spirit I look forward to each year. ☺

### PAM'S SUMMER PUDDING

1 kg prepared mixed berries

170 g caster sugar

85 ml cold water

12 thin slices good quality white bread, crusts removed

a 1.7 lt pudding basin

#### Decoration

mixed fresh berries

sprigs of fresh mint

Place the fruit in a heavy-based non-aluminium pan with the sugar and water. Cook over a gentle heat for approximately 5 minutes or until the sugar has dissolved and the juices begin to run. Strain and reserve the juice.

Soak the bread in the reserved juice and then use the slices to line the pudding basin, keeping four slices aside. Spoon the fruit into the basin and pack it in well. Cut the extra slices to fit securely over the top of the fruit then pour over any remaining juice. Cover the pudding with cling film, weigh it down with a plate that fits the top and chill overnight. To serve, remove the film, turn the pudding upside-down on the plate and decorate with fresh berries and mint. This dish can be frozen in the basin for up to 2 months, then defrosted in the fridge overnight. Enjoy! ☺



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# Keeping The Sun Out

by Alexander Cranford, Hay, NSW.

A much neglected subject of discussion is keeping the sun out of north- and west-facing windows during the summer. The quandary in aiming for a low-energy home is that the most effective passive heating home becomes correspondingly uncomfortable in summer. Permanent shading results in reduced passive heating for the rest of the year. The answer is to have an effective passive heating home, but with adjustable shading over the north- and west-facing windows for summer.

For the owner-occupier, external window shutters and awnings for windows and verandahs are all worth thinking about, but come at a price. Cane blinds that can be mounted externally can be bought from shops that sell cheap imported household products. However, do not expect them to last forever.

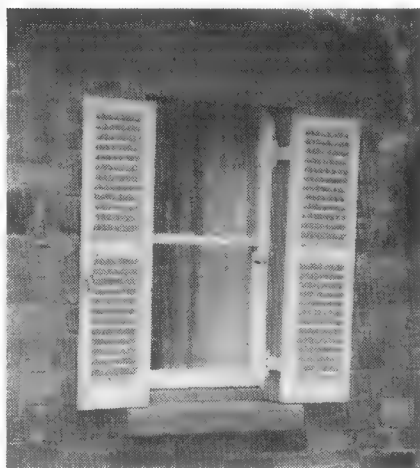
Drawing the curtains, pulling down a roller blind, or even hanging up an old bed sheet is better than nothing at all. The old-fashioned wide-blade venetian blinds are quite effective, but not cheap. It is highly unlikely that you will ever achieve total sun blackout. This means on hot sunny days there will still be enough light to find your way around the room. Try to have task-specific lighting. Even if you need the main light on for, say, cleaning, it is still more cost effective than to have all that sun coming into the room.

## CHEAP, QUICK OPTIONS

There are a number of other cheaper but less aesthetically pleasing options. You do not necessarily have to cover the entire window, only the part that receives direct sunlight. If you are renting, you should ask the landlord or agent before making any changes. If the house is in need of renovation, they might not mind.

- If you live in an old house with wooden window frames, you can cut open and attach hessian potato sacks using thumbtacks.

- Attach kitchen foil directly to the



window with Bluetack.

- If a piece of plasterboard can be held in securely, you might get hold of a piece from the tip, or ask at a building site. This is quite effective on its own, but is even more effective with foil attached. Much the same thing can be achieved with cardboard.

- Less effective, but very quick, is to paint a paste of whiting and water directly onto the glass. When you do not want it on any more just rub off with a damp cloth.

- Hang shade cloth outside from the eaves. Secure with thumbtacks. Sixty percent grade shade cloth should suffice for most people.

To get hold of hessian potato sacks, ask nicely at your local supermarket or fruit and veg shop. Incidentally, these sacks, opened, are good for shade cloth in the garden. Just attach to a piece of wire mesh from the tip and bend into a low arch and attach with clothes pegs. ☺

## FLY SPRAY

For an organic fly spray, dissolve one tablespoon of eucalyptus oil and one teaspoon of bergamot oil in five tablespoons of vodka. Then add two tablespoons of white vinegar and finally five cups of water. Store in a pump spray and shake before use. ☺

## WINDOW PROTECTION

Just how effective is your window protection? These figures will give you an idea of the percentage of solar energy that enters a room where various means of protection are used. Keep in mind that an unshaded window allows 100 percent solar energy ingress.

- Double glazing – 90 percent.
- Venetian blinds, inside, closed – dark colour, 85 percent; medium colour, 65 percent; white, 55 percent.

- Closely woven drapes or roller blinds, drawn – dark colour, 80 percent; medium colour, 50 percent; white, 40 percent; silver, 35 percent.

- Tinted glass – 40 to 65 percent.
- Solar film on inside of glass, depending on shading coefficient – 40 to 60 percent.

- Trees, full shade – 20 percent.
- Trees, light shade – 60 percent.
- External canvas awning, drawn – medium to dark colour, 25 percent; white, 15 percent.

External storm shutters – 30 percent.

- Two-metre pergola over north window covered with vines or shade cloth – 20 percent.

- External metal blind or louveres close to window – 10 to 15 percent.

Note that the darker the colour of blinds, drapes or awnings the less their effectiveness at excluding solar energy. ☺

## INSECT REPELLENT

Make a quick, personal insect repellent at home by boiling two cups of water and adding two tablespoons of Epsom salts then stirring in a teaspoon of eucalyptus oil. Cool, store in a screw top jar. Shake well then apply thinly over arms and legs. ☺



# Natural Fruit Fly Predator

by Trevor Wilkins, Russell Island, Qld.



Think before you spray. The answer to the problem could be right there in front of your nose. Leave the poison in the store and experiment organically and you'll be glad you did. I am.

For example, for the second year in a row this year, I found absolutely zero fruit fly grubs in my peaches, thanks to some predatory visitors that have decided to stay. The peaches are covered in webs spun by beautiful, small green spiders. The spiders are in plague proportions and I think they must also eat mosquitoes because their webs are thick in the rafters of the wigwam under which I build my prototype canoes and catamarans. They seem to follow my local harvest trail. I have also noticed them standing guard on my mangos, lilly-pillies and ice cream beans. I gave the local Department of Primary Industries office some spider

photos and they identified them as a type of lynx spider, *Oxyopes macilentus*, a hunter that jumps on its prey.

Everyone else I know has the dreaded fruit fly. If you have ever lived in Queensland, you will know just how unbelievably fantastic it is that these peerless pests are at last leaving me alone. The Queensland fruit fly is the ultimate sneaking spoiler costing hard-working farmers millions each year. Normally, growers must either spray or have no peaches. To spray or not to spray? For years I have opted for the second option and sadly watched my peaches rot on the trees, riddled with fruit fly maggots. The trouble with spraying is that I would have killed all the resident spiders and only half of the visiting fruit flies. Predator populations need time to multiply. Also, don't forget spraying is a waste of time in

rainy weather, and each year you'll need a stronger dose as your target insect develops natural immunity.

I am now collecting my eight-legged spider friends to give to my two-legged organic gardening friends to put in their stone fruit trees. Let's hope the spiders multiply and gobble up their fruit flies too.

We have published information about fruit fly control several times in past issues. An article in GR 112 discussed the life cycle of the fly, orchard management, lures, traps and repellents. A Feedback letter in GR 137 recommended the use of paper bags to exclude the flies, available from Green Harvest, 52 Crystal Waters, MS 16, via Maleny 4552. In GR 139 Bill Thomas wrote about a nontoxic killing system based on a native essential oil. Contact Wild May Essential Oils on: 07-3349-5283. ♀

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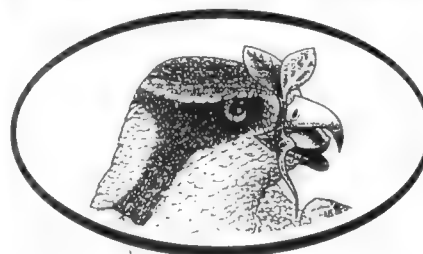
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# Heritage Sheep Breeds

## THE DORSET HORN

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

Older GR readers will remember the Dorset Horn as it was a very popular breed half a century ago and enjoyed years as a premier fat lamb sire. The Dorset Horn was subsequently replaced by the Poll Dorset, and 'fat lamb' became a term to avoid, the modern leaner lamb being called 'prime'. Dorset Horns were certainly commonplace when I was a youngster and could still be observed when GR began. The distinctive curled horns on both sexes made recognition of the breed easy.

'They're a damn good sheep', a farming friend commented recently. 'It's a pity a large proportion of the genetic pool has been lost.' It was the presence of horns that led to the breed's fall from favour. Horned sheep were – and are still – difficult to handle. You can't mix them with polled sheep in trucks or yards because of the potential damage the horned stock can do.

It's well known horned animals carry their heads high and polled specimens low and, of course, horns are liable to become caught in wire fencing so extra checking is required. All rams have the odd blue and charge head on with astonishing strength. The problem with horned rams stouthing is that the base of the horn becomes damaged, bleeds, and fly strike occurs.

It's easy to understand the thinking in the 1950s that if the horns could just be taken off the Dorset less labour would be needed to manage it. Why not just cut the horns off? Actually, the rams did have their horns cut because of the tendency of the spiralling to obscure eyes, or even curve into the socket. The trouble with this practice was it reduced the opportunity to select for an open horn in rams. Once cut back there was no way of knowing if they were tightly curled or more open. This led to a higher incidence of tighter horns appearing on ewes and affecting

sight. The idea of a polled Dorset was discussed and breeders started the time-consuming development program.

Dorset Horns arrived in Australia in 1895 and were initially no challenge to the dominance of the very popular Shropshire and, later, Southdown. Both were used to produce lucrative export lamb. But Dorset Horns brought a unique characteristic to sheep production, the ability to mate at any time of year. The ewes of other British breeds showed little inclination to mate in the summer months; the Dorset Horn was the only breed in Australia aside from the Merino with this economically advantageous trait. It enabled farmers in the years ahead to mate sheep to suit differing climatic conditions, especially those with short early seasons that were preceded by hot dry conditions and an excess of grass seeds.

In England the Dorset Horn was local to the area around Dorchester. In fact, Daniel Defoe, of *Robinson Crusoe* fame, commented during a trip around England in 1724 that over 500,000 head were folded (tightly yarded) within six miles of the centre of this town, for the production of dung. They were recognised as early breeders and ewes were purchased by farmers from around London for producing lucrative Christmas lamb. For centuries the distinctive horns, year-long breeding ability and wonderful milkiness of ewes had been remarked on and lauded.

In Australia the Dorset Horn was found to cross well with the long-woolled breeds and with mature Merino ewes, the maiden ewes often having problems with lambs inheriting the wide shoulders of the Dorset. The breed was soon in the front rank for early-maturing lamb, though second to Southdown for quality of carcass. It held ground until the polled variety began to dominate as a terminal sire in



The Dorset Horn ram usually has horns cut to avoid accidents in yards. He's a solid sheep used for prime lamb production.

the 1970s. Around 22 active studs are keeping the breed going, but more breeders, even small ones, are needed.

### BREED PROFILE

This is a medium to large robust sheep with a long broad face, rounded bold

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The horns on ewes are fine with open curled tips so they don't damage or obscure eyes.

pink muzzle and curled horns. These are very large on the male with graceful curves close to the head, smaller and more delicate on females. The neck is strong, medium length and muscular on males, chest is full and deep and the back long, broad and straight with well sprung ribs. Quarters are deep, broad and full with fleshing extending to hocks. Well placed legs are medium in length and hooves are pale.

#### Temperament

As a breed that was folded (penned) by shepherds for centuries you can expect Dorset Horns to be easy to manage. They're physically strong, however, so regular handling is recommended to keep them quiet, and a watchful eye must be kept on rams when with them because of their horns. Ewes are protective of young.

#### Recommended Environment

Like any fast maturing breed, Dorset Horns will grow and do best on good pasture, but they're hardy, active and very adaptable. If you want high production, and by this we mean multiple births or three crops of lambs in two years, which the breed is capable of, they have to be fed very well. Irrigated pasture or a long growing season would be necessary. Smallholders might find Dorset Horns ideal because they can be mated to take advantage of seasonal situations.

#### Fibre Character

This is of secondary importance to most Dorset Horn breeders. Fleece is short and dense like Down's type wool, firm handling and around 30 – 31 micron.

#### Carcass Production

The Dorset Horn is considered a terminal sire, so you make the most of their genetic traits by putting them over first-cross ewes. Alternatively, good results could be achieved by crossing with Merino ewes. The advantage of the first cross over a straight Merino is in the increased milk supply, an important factor as Dorset Horns are prolific and may beget twins when nutrition is supportive at mating time. Lambs inherit the excellent conformation of the Dorset Horn, the muscling, lean carcass and fast growth, and are quite able to meet commercial weights.

#### Breeding

The rams can serve from seven months

of age and don't incline to laziness as they get older, like other British breeds. You can anticipate a lengthy period of usefulness with Dorset Horns. As previously stated, rams don't confine activity to a short period but will mate out of season. Ewes too are very flexible, even taking the ram when a lamb is at foot. Ewes are said to be able to count, a reference to their solicitous care of lambs, especially twins, and they also have a reputation for standing up to dogs or foxes threatening their lambs. Milk supply is excellent and is one of the reasons for the fast growth of young. Tests of milk in England for suitability in cheese making showed it to be unusually high in butterfat and solids-not-fat, another factor, no doubt, in hastening growth.

#### Special Features

It's important to appreciate that the Dorset Horn was superseded by the polled variety for no other reason than the inconvenience of its horns. Its position as a superior prime lamb sire was well recognised. The Dorset Horn's potential for twinning, early maturing and lean carcass, plus it's ability to adapt to regional breeding requirements, puts it in the forefront for small-scale meat production on low acreages.

#### Association Viewpoint

Robert Grieve, President, says: 'Never before has there been as much competition from different terminal breeds. This has led to studmasters striving to improve the Dorset Horn. The breed is particularly suited to producing lambs that meet elite lamb specifications and also domestic trade-weight lambs in a very short period of time. Their early maturation has led them to be known as the sucker lamb specialist! Horns are now removed before they are 12 months old, or before they enter the show ring, which has helped breeders with their management. Many of the largest and most successful Poll Dorset Studs in Australia still maintain links with the Dorset Horns by using them in their Polled flocks. To this end the Dorset Horn breed is known as the "true breed that breeds true".'

Contact details of the association are provided on page 80. 🐏

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# Livestock Health and Management

## Information You Need but Haven't Known Where to Ask

If you have queries on any type of livestock send them in and we'll get our panel of experts to research the problem for you. Post them to Livestock Advice Page, Grass Roots, PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

### HELPING CHICKS HATCH

I have an unusual question – can you help a chicken break out of the shell when it seems slow to hatch? The broody hen excitedly left the nest with a few chicks, uninterested in the state of the remaining fertile eggs. Several held live chickens as they had pecked a small hole in the shell and were chirping, but even though I took them inside and kept them warm on a hot water bottle, they sounded as though they became too weak to continue pecking and so must have died. What's the go with pecked hatching eggs? Could I have gently broken away the shell and helped them out? Would I need to sterilise my hands or wear medical gloves, or just what could or should I do? The idea totally terrifies me, but the surviving chickens are healthy and gorgeous and it worries me that I didn't do all I could have.

**Carolyn Alan,  
LINWOOD 5410**

*Sounds as though you're doing a fine job with your poultry Carolyn and generally you can rely on a broody to stay on the eggs for around 24 hours after the first chick hatches. The variation in the hatching time between the chicks and the pipped eggs would have been due to age of eggs; the freshest hatch first. You can add around an hour for each day the egg has been in the nest, which, if it's*

*14 days old, would increase hatching time by at least 14 hours. So the eggs may have been abandoned because the chicks inside were slow and weak and not responding appropriately to the hen's cluck-clucking, or she may have been a first-timer or even plain scatty. Many people have favourite broodies that they use year after year because they've proved themselves superior sitters and mothers. The would-be broodies are removed from the nest into a wire coop so they lose interest in sitting. Think about your little hen and see if she needs to be put into the would-be group and not used for setting another year. Now, can you assist the chicks from the eggs? Yes and no. Yes you can if it is overdue, that is, it should have pecked its way out, having pipped the shell hours ago. It may have become chilled and so slowed down, and you could gently break some shell away from the pipped hole. Do this slowly, looking out for the presence of blood still on tiny veins in the membrane lining the shell. The no refers to the fact that if the yolk sac has not been totally absorbed (and all blood absorbed from the membrane), when you break the shell you risk shocking the chick and precipitating death. Clean hands are a wise precaution, but sterile gloves etc are not necessary. Be prepared that as you break off pieces of shell the chick will be wet and bedraggled looking. It's better to take time over this process and let the chick do the final squeezing out in its*

*own time. Ensure the chick is out of draughts as it will quickly chill. Expect it to lie exhausted for a time, and then as it dries out and warms up (it needs warmth from a light globe or hot water bottle) it should get up on wobbly legs and stand. Keep it safe and warm for a few days, offering budgie seed, finely chopped boiled eggs or chick starter. If given to the mother and vigorous brood straight away, it will not be able to keep up and will be left behind and die. Kidnapping a stronger chick and putting it with your new fellow for company should get it going and make assimilation into the brood easier.*

### SCALY LEG AND VICKS

I recently read in another magazine that it was okay to use Vicks on chooks' legs, but I'm sure it wasn't recommended in GR. What is the reservation about it?

**John Cronyn,  
DUMBARTON 6566.**

*In a word, it burns. As the Vicks warms up and the bird moves around in direct sunlight, it becomes unpleasant if not painful for the bird. How do we know? We trialled it on one leg of a fowl and observed the bird most distressed and pecking at the leg and then standing with it held off the ground. Straight petroleum jelly will soften the scales and crusted matter and also assist in suffocating the mites, with less distress caused to the bird. 🐾*

## Poultry Breeders

We're looking for purebred breeders of the different poultry species to list in our next edition of the *Poultry Breeders Directory*.

**Send a stamped SAE for an entry form to: Poultry Directory, PO Box 117, Seymour 3661.**

## ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES FOR ANIMALS



**\$98 Pet Power Pack First Aid Kit**  
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## ECO NEWS

### BUSH HERITAGE PROGRESS

One of Australia's largest biodiversity revegetation projects has been recently completed on the Bush Heritage property Chereninup in WA. In the first stage of many plantings that will gradually establish a biolink connecting the Stirling Range and Fitzgerald River National Parks, volunteers planted the last of 50,000 seedlings into ground previously seeded with indigenous species. The multi-species planting, believed to be the largest of its kind, will create a diverse habitat that should, in time, resemble a natural bush ecosystem and host native birds, mammals, reptiles and insects. Seed was collected from remnant and regenerated species on site, some being propagated to produce the seedlings planted by volunteers and the remainder being direct-sown into 280 kilometres of rows following the contours of the land.

More exciting Bush Heritage news is that a new property of 214,000 hectares on the northern edge of the Simpson Desert in western Queensland has become the latest reserve. The property has vast areas of habitat for a range of desert wildlife and includes ephemeral lakes supporting huge numbers of waterfowl.

For more information about Bush Heritage properties and how you can help protect indigenous habitat contact: 1800-677-101 or visit [www.bushheritage.org](http://www.bushheritage.org)

### MICROBES EAT CHEMICALS

Microbes that eat toxic waste have been used in a small way to clean up some contaminated sites. The latest discovery with potential for pollution amelioration is a bacterium known as BAV1. It was found in America in soil samples from six metres underground and flourishes in that anaerobic environment where it feeds on vinyl chloride, a common industrial pollutant that can contaminate soil for hundreds of years. Brief contact with vinyl chloride can cause headaches and dizziness and long-term exposure is said to increase the risk of liver cancer.

### HOT ROCKS

Promising research into clean energy production utilising the heat stored in rocks far underground beneath the Hunter Valley in NSW and the Cooper Basin in SA has been progressing for a number of years. At the time of writing a commercial well was being drilled in the Cooper Basin and had reached 4.3 kilometres deep of a projected depth of nearly five kilometres. The temperature of the rocks at 4.3 kilometres was 250° C and was expected to reach 300° C at the target depth.

Water will be injected into the well and its flow through the rock monitored to determine the best site for a second well that will tap off the resulting steam. Energy will be produced

when cold water is pumped down the first well and steam extracted from the second. A power station at the surface will be run by the steam. The energy available in this way from the Cooper Basin is said to be over 15 times more than that of Australia's known oil reserves.

### CONTROLLING ALGAL BLOOMS

Western Australia's sandy soils are liable to leach nutrients into waterways and contribute to algal blooms. A recent study found that many areas of sandy soil on the Swan coastal plain are nutrient saturated and at a critical stage where environmental damage can occur. In 2002 Perth produced over 120,000 tonnes of organic waste material. Most of this was dumped in landfill where its decomposition produced methane gas. Made into compost, however, and used as a fertiliser, the waste would produce the much less harmful carbon dioxide. Methane has 21 times the impact on global warming of carbon dioxide. The study revealed that blending clay with the compost and incorporating it in sandy soil increases the water- and nutrient-holding capacity of the soil, stabilises soil pH and reduces the need for supplementary fertilisers, with the additional environmental benefits of reducing greenhouse emissions and algal blooms in waterways. ♻

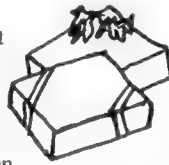


Some of the volunteer planters who helped revegetate a 60-hectare site at Chereninup Creek Reserve in WA. Photo appeared in the *Bush Heritage News* Spring 2003.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR Readers,

Maybe some of you would like to hear about my experience with the use of **SHADECLOTH OVER A VEGETABLE PATCH**. I live in an area of SA where the conditions in summer are hot and dry and water quality is poor. I found that I needed to constantly water vegetables even though the soil had been fertilised with animal manures, dug and mulched well.



To address the problem I decided to have the area fitted with grey shade cloth. This I thought would reduce water consumption and water costs. There would be less time required for watering and the vegies would grow quicker and better. No so. Imagine my surprise. I was experimenting with two plots of silverbeet, one grown under the shade cloth while the other was exposed to full sunlight and harsh conditions. The silverbeet grown in full sunlight was greener in colour and noticeably more vigorous than the silverbeet grown under shade cloth. Neither did the zucchinis, rock melons, capsicums and cucumbers do well. I am still experimenting with the potatoes, broad beans and runner beans.

I am of the opinion that grey shade cloth filters out the UV light necessary for photosynthesis to occur. Also, I am told that bees won't go under a grey coloured shade cloth but will if another colour is used. If anyone else has had similar experience please drop me a line.

Mary Clark,

PO Box 63, ORROROO 5431.



Dear Grass Roots,

Firstly, thanks to John Mount for the article about seaweed. My grandmother's house was insulated with seaweed, which I thought must have been a firetrap, but now I know better. Her house was a beautiful old corrugated iron place in Broken Hill, which the current owners have unfortunately turned into a cream brick monstrosity, no doubt removing the seaweed in the process!

Does anyone have a recipe for making **PEACH BEER**? Or any other easy, no-fuss ways of using/preserving peaches? I have two littlies under two so am very busy, but hate to see the fruit from our very fertile tree going to waste.

Finally, Kel Connell's article on RSI was spot on. People may not realise that this type of injury can be caused or aggravated by everyday activities. The latest term is cumulative trauma disorder (CTD), which recognises that problems in muscles and tendons can build up over a period of time. While gripping is a common cause, these injuries can also be caused by inappropriate posture, such as slumping in a chair, hunching forward to a computer screen or balancing a phone receiver on your shoulder. All these are preventable. Black foam rubber pipe insulation (available from rubber shops) is cheap and can be used to build up all sorts of handles and grips. Become aware of your posture when sitting, standing and working. Your feet should be supported and your whole spine in a relaxed upright position. Stopping repetitive actions and regularly resting and stretching your muscles in the opposite direction helps the bloodstream remove the waste products that cause pain. Learning to relax, such as through yoga, might help. Finally, if you suspect you have this type of injury, as well as seeking medical help, find an occupational therapist with experience in this area. They will be able to prescribe stretches, look at your posture and help with changing the equipment or tools that you use.



Judith Merritt,  
TORRENSVILLE.

Email: judith\_merritt@yahoo.com

Dear Grass Roots,

I wrote about four years ago with regard to my husband's depression (now largely past) and my middle daughter's nasty eczema (turned out to be a dairy intolerance), and received a plethora of help, advice and support in the form of letters from many wonderful readers. Due to our situation, and an almost immediate move, I was unable to respond to them, but I thank them all belatedly now.

I am writing now to ask advice in the area of **ARTS AND CRAFTS**. I run a craft group for a number of ladies, most of whom (including myself) cannot afford all the things we're 'supposed' to have. It is my belief, borne out by experience, that you can make beautiful things with very little outlay, but I would love some more ideas! First, how do I get cheaper materials that won't fall apart quickly, as crafting something cheaply isn't worth it unless it will last. Second, glues/adhesives are making me crazy! If it isn't toxic, it leaves big ripples in the paper/material; if it doesn't, then it doesn't stick properly, and I won't touch spray adhesives at any price. I can't find anything to stick vellum down that isn't immediately (and usually tragically) visible. Third, my first love is cross stitch and I'm looking for copyright-free patterns I can use to teach with. Fourth, and most importantly, I want to do beautiful and natural crafts, so would love ideas for craft items that are useful, but that use a large proportion of natural, easily collectible items such as gumnuts and leaves.

My hints for any beginner crafters out there are: Use your local library if you have one. So many books and magazines out of our price range can be borrowed. Just remember copyright (only 10 percent allowed to be copied) if you're using the information in the community. Use the Internet if you're connected. Type in 'free crafts' or similar and I guarantee you'll be downloading happily for hours. Join a group of like-minded people and share resources and ideas. Sometimes this is hard, so if you've no luck finding one, then start one!

Finally, can I make an appeal? If you have skills like knitting, crochet, tatting, patchworking and embroidery, please start teaching any of your local children who are interested. I'm starting a lunch-time interest group in a school in July and the response I've had from other mothers who want their children to learn these skills before they disappear is amazing!

Kirri Griffiths,

5 Eldon St, INDOOROPILLY 4068.

Dear GRs,

Some time back a reader wrote to GR about **ABSTAINING FROM EATING TOMATOES** for those who suffer from arthritis because tomatoes are acidic. However, I have been reliably informed that less red tomatoes are less acidic, therefore white, yellow and orange tomatoes could be a good option. This year I am growing white and yellow tomatoes and will let you know how they affect my arthritis.

I wish to find out in what issue of GR the chilli drink recipes appeared.

Mala and I would like to extend an invitation to any GR reader who is planning to **VISIT ENGLAND IN 2004**. A week's accommodation can be arranged. We have a few good flower and vegetable shows, a Chilli Fiesta and the Garlic Festival during August. I am also involved in community gardening in Watford so there is a chance of meeting other gardeners. We are 17 miles from the city of London.

Mala & Vic Magedera,

72 North Western Ave, WATFORD WD 25 OAE, ENGLAND.

*There was a chilli wine recipe in GR 134. Is this the drink you mean? You will find information relevant to arthritis in GRs 142 and 136.*

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg, Mary & all at GR,

After realising I hadn't read the last three issues I decided to have the weekend off and do some reading! Sacrilege! Three unread *Grass Roots* magazines is a record for me, but such is the life of a teacher. I haven't had time for lots of things this year. In between teaching in what's been a stressful year at school with lots of changes, I've managed to do a bit of gardening.

We had good rains earlier in the year, but not drought breaking. We've decided to sell all our cattle because we can no longer afford to supplementary feed them. We want to give the place a break so when we do get sufficient rains we will be able to replant cleared areas with improved pasture. Unfortunately, the new tree clearing laws to be put into force in Queensland lend a degree of uncertainty to our operation and may make us unviable. That is yet to be determined.

In the meantime I'll add my two-bobs worth to some of the articles and requests in recent issues. There have been some very good articles in recent issues about **MOVING TO THE RURAL AND REGIONAL AREAS** of Australia. Another point to add for consideration is your vehicle. What sort of access is there to a property? 2WD or 4WD? Is the road leading to your front passable in wet weather, or is it boggy or slippery after two spits? Does the area 'grow' rocks, which 'congregate' in the middle of the dirt road and wreck the underside of your car? Don't laugh! Where we lived in the Yarakka area was like this.

I also enjoyed the articles on coloured sheep. I had 50 at one stage until they were 'accidentally' sold from where they were agisted. Mine were all Merinos of various shades of brown. I also had one that produced fibres of different colours up individual staples, often three colours. Does anyone know what would cause this? We also got some steel blue-grey coloured ones occasionally from a particular area. I was told the colouring was from a mineral deficiency in the soils, and hence the pasture in the area (copper I think). Has anyone ever heard of this before? Currently, I only have two coloured sheep left plus a black-faced wether and a Damara ram.

The article 'Country Place in the Suburbs' in GR 156 amazed me with how much they could squeeze into one block of land. I've heard of some of the fruit trees; would they be suitable for an area with winter frosts and summer temperatures in the 40s? We also have clay soil, but I mound all my fruit trees now and they seem to do all right. Also, a supplier of arhar pea, jaboticaba, mamey sapote, ice cream bean, Brazilian cherry, peachcot and tropical raspberry would be great. I bought a raspberry plant last year and got seven raspberries off it (who's counting!). I can't find any information on its fertilising needs or whether it needs to be pruned. Can anyone help me with this information please? It grows in a large pot and has died down at the moment (June). I also have a problem with my rosellas. For a few years they grew really well in the veggie garden, then last year they started to die. The leaves droop one day, turn brown the next and then they're dead. I took a plant to the nursery, complete with soil, and they thought it was a borer and suggested applying lawn grub killer, which I did, and one still died. I have one surviving plant. They didn't all die together and they were all over 30 centimetres tall and otherwise seemed healthy when they died. The veggie garden is a mixture of sand, loam and feedlot manure about three years old. No other plants have been affected.

I've found a good use for leftover fleece wool - mulch around fruit trees and as a protectant against frost and cold. I wrap the trunks of susceptible trees in newspaper and make a mound of wool around the base about 10 centimetres tall and 30 centimetres

in diameter. So far it's working.

Congratulations on 30 years of *Grass Roots*! I'll get through GR 157 when I finally finish GR 156!

Karen Long,  
PO Box 46, MILES 4415.

Dear Grass Roots & Readers,

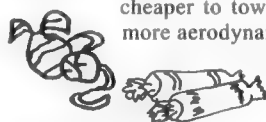
I am writing in the hope that a reader can help us. We are two women, 40 and 50, who are moving back to Rockhampton in August for our work and also our family. We are wanting to rent acreage close to Rockhampton or nearby beaches, whether it be a house, livable shed or caravan set-up. Anything will suit us as long as there is power and water, a place to have a veggie patch and a few chooks. We are quite willing to do work on the place to keep it productive and clean. If any reader can help us out, please email us at: giddymate1962@yahoo.com, or phone: 0405-669-153. Thank you readers for your time.

Jen Ladynski,  
ROCKBANK 3335.

Dear GR,

I was rereading GR 155, page 54, where Dianne Warren of Maroon had **POSSUM AND PEST PROBLEMS**, and a light bulb went on, as they say. I wondered if anyone had used an old electric fence system bought at a garage or clearing sale. I think I've seen them as cheap as \$10. Maybe some chicken wire around the garden or over the open window and connected to the electric fence pulser could do the trick. Could be good for keeping foxes away from the chook shed at night too. It's just a thought that someone with that frame of mind and incentive might have tried and perfected a workable system. A wire close to the ground might keep slugs, grubs and snails away too.

Browsing through a horse magazine at the local library can be an enlightening experience. Monster vacuum cleaners for sucking up horse poo, horse mattresses, horse floats and all manner of things I'd never been aware of are advertised. The **HORSE-FLOATS** or trailers for horses range from small one-horse affairs to semitrailer horse buses, detachable from the ute or truck that's pulling them. Some are fitted out as living quarters for their owners, just like caravans. However, they are much much cheaper to buy than caravans and, I'm told, size for size much easier and cheaper to tow because they are generally lighter and more aerodynamic so the towing vehicle uses less fuel.



Roberino,  
PO Box 359, WOOLGOOLGA 2456.

Hi Everyone,

I have been an avid reader of GR for a long time. In fact, when I read it at night I sleep like a log - tells me something! I have never written before, but I'm getting desperate for a cure to my problem, which is **WEEPY EYES**. Some days large tears fall involuntarily, at other times, which is nearly always, my eyes just fill with water and look as if I'm crying. There seems to be a tie in with muscle aches and pains, the worse they are the more tears. Some days I feel as if I have been kicked around a paddock. I do have mild osteo. I have tried hard to eliminate possible causes, but so far nothing clicks. The medical profession does not seem to help at all. I have always put great store in natural remedies, but nothing seems to work. Has anyone out there any ideas?

Moya Houlahan,  
65 Gulf Pde, MASLIN BEACH 5170.

Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg & Crew,

It has been far too long since I put pen to paper and sent a letter in your direction. Once again it is to let you know that we have changed our address. Over the years I have written several articles for you, from chook waterers to heavy horse safety. Ray wrote as well, about making a forge from car inner tubes.

We used to be in Cobargo, NSW, a lovely village, with equally lovely people, and we left behind many good friends. But our little family is getting larger, with more grandkids on the ground, and the kids finally talked us into coming back home to Queensland. So we sold up and packed up all the goods and chattels and **WHEELWRIGHT SHOP**, loaded another semitrailer and here we are – this time at Aratula near Boonah. Still headed for the bush, but only on six acres, which is enough for us, with only one horse now.

Our faithful Clydesdale mare, Gypsy, who taught so many the meaning of 'gentle giant', had to be put down two weeks before we were due to leave, with cancer of the hoof. We have had special animals die before, but she was one in a million. She taught beginners at our heavy horse training days, took brides to their weddings, and even Santa Claus to meet the village children. Even though she went seven months ago (November 2002), just watching the Clydesdale section of the Boonah Show ring events brought back a tear to the eye and a: 'Gypsy would have beaten the pants off them!' My! How animals can worm their way into your heart!

I seem to miss every special event that GR is having, like the 100th edition and now your 30th anniversary. Not that I don't read GR, but procrastination is one of my worst points. So a belated happy 30th to one and all. I have enjoyed being a very small part of GR over the years and hope that I can participate in the future.

We will still be carrying on with the wheelwrighting and carriage restoration, but Roy's spare time is spent now building a live steam locomotive. It seems we were meant to buy the block of land we did because it has part of the old Mt Edwards railway line on it, which we hope to re-lay line on. We'd also like, when we can afford to buy one (and find one), a guards or goods van, for me as a studio and tack room (to put on the line). I think we have lost our senses because our six acres is bare and we are building again, for the third time. We must be mad! But at least we own it.

While we are waiting for the builders to get their act together, we are back into fencing paddocks, building sheds and landscaping. We have town water and electricity this time. Last time we



lived in Queensland (Laidley) we didn't have either and at our age a few comforts don't go astray. I hope this letter finds you all well and happy as it leaves us the same.

Judy & Roy Clark,  
24 Matilda St, ARATULA 4309.

Dear Megg, Mary & Crew,

How quickly time flies; it seems as if it was only a few weeks ago we were celebrating issue 100, yesterday since the 25-year celebrations. Didn't issue 150 just arrive? And now it's 157 and 30 years. I remember as a child thinking that my mother must have been quite mad when she said that Christmases seemed to get closer and closer together each year. At the time, through a child's eyes, it seemed as though there was an eternity between one Christmas and the next, but now, as a 50-year-old, I realise Mum was far from mad, she was right all along!

Christopher and Bryan are now in alternative schooling after not doing well in mainstream secondary school. Next year Christopher plans to start an engineering course at TAFE. Ben is going well at the Special Development School at Mount Evelyn. He's very

happy there and the staff do a wonderful job.

I've been sharing a **MARKET STALL** with a friend since just before Christmas 2002. I've been selling knitted toys, baby clothes, second-hand books and bric-a-brac and am trying to add more crafts to the range. If anyone lives in or visits Melbourne, visit the Eley Park Community Centre Market, Eley Road, South Blackburn on the first Sunday of each month (no market in January, December's is held on the second Sunday).

The boundary fences around my place are due to be replaced in a couple of weeks and once that's finished I hope to be able to recycle some of the old timber to make borders for some **NO-DIG GARDEN BEDS**. I'm madly adding all sorts of kitchen scraps, hair, grass, eggshells, weeds and whatever else I can get hold of into my compost bin so I'll have some lovely organic matter to add to the beds.

Eventually, if I can get a deposit together or find an alternative way of financing it, I'll move onto a block, around half to three-quarters of an acre, with a house in fairly reasonable condition. I don't want a leaky roof, termites, or to have to restump. Painting and the like won't be a problem though. One day it'll happen, and in the meantime I just remember the saying – 'A life without dreams is like a garden without flowers', and I do what I can here in suburbia.

On a closing note, I'm wondering if anyone has a recipe for a ginger beer plant like the one I had years ago? The recipe had 8 – 12 sultanas and a few grains of dried yeast, along with the usual ginger, sugar and lemon juice/pulp. Unfortunately, my copy went missing when we moved house and I'd love to try it again.

I hope *Grass Roots*, its staff and its readers keep on going strong for another 30 years or more.

Vicki Judd & Family,

59 Beresford Drv, BORONIA 3155.



Dear Grass Roots,

I recently wrote to Feedback request a copy of *The Early Years*, hoping a reader would kindly sell me a copy. Well, lo and behold, while browsing though the local op shop recently, I came across quite a few old issues of GR. To my joy, in amongst this treasure trove I discovered not only *The Early Years*, but also the *Bumper Book* and *The Earth Builders Companion*. I was thrilled to bits, absolutely could not believe my luck, and bought the lot (naturally) for a song. So, to anyone out there who is looking for these seemingly impossible to find issues don't give up hope; they could turn up when you least expect it. Keep up the good work at GR and thank you for a wonderful publication.

Deborah Stephens,

2/9-13 Lonerganne St, Garbutt, TOWNSVILLE 4814.

Dear Megg & Gang,

My partner and I will be hitching up the old caravan and heading over to Queensland, down the coast and eventually back to our home in WA. We would like to hear from any GR readers who would let us **PARK THE VAN** for a day or two. We are completely self-sufficient and have no pets or children on the trip.

We are both in our mid fifties and have been wanting to do this trip for some time. We leave at the end of September 2003 and we hope to get back to WA in time for our 90th birthdays. Lee has some decorative ideas for painting the caravan outer so we'll easily be spotted by GR readers. If you see us, stop and have a cuppa and chat.

Derek & Lee Christine,

9 Alexandra Crt, DURAK 0830.



# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

**Dear Megg & Staff at GR,**

I used to be a subscriber, but then my mother offered her copies to me so I accepted and of course I had no need for a second copy. The only drawback was receiving my copy later than usual, after Mum had read each magazine. I have now asked Mum to pass on her copies to someone else because I would like my GRs earlier. I have moved from the city to a seven-acre property 45 minutes from Perth and 35 minutes from Millard – north-east of Perth in the high country. It's the best of both worlds!

With the *Grass Roots* magazines my mother and I have collected over many years (only half a dozen are missing from our collection), we have a huge pool of information to help us with life on the land. Megg and helps your vision and ongoing information is fantastic!



Happy days and warm nights with busy hands and contented minds to all.

Carolyn & Peter,  
176 Dryarton Rd, Rolling Green,  
MORANGUP 6083.

**Hi GR,**

Thanks Megg and everyone for a great magazine. I've read quite a few issues from our local library, but have just bought myself the 30th anniversary issue, 157. I love the Feedback pages and enjoy reading about other people's lives and experiences.

My husband and I moved out here to the country from Brisbane about four years ago.

To Roberino (157): I too have an interest in **PRICKLY PEAR AS A FOOD PRODUCT**. I was interested to read that Mexicans have used it as a food source for years. An interesting book is *The Washer Woman's Dream* by Hilarie Lindsay. It's about the extraordinary life of Winifred Steger, a pioneer on the Darling Downs, where prickly pear overran the land in the late 1800s. They used the fruit in jam and Hilarie speaks about it. It is truly an inspirational story.

Thanks to Sue Jackson (157) for her letter. I too have wanted to make soap as it is a costly necessity. I've been worried about using caustic soda, but GR gives me confidence and inspiration. I also don't use fabric softener as I've found most tend to rot the fabric and many towels have developed holes. Also, some are high flame risk, unless otherwise stated.

Kerry,

793 North Branch Rd, MARYVALE 4370.

**Dear Readers,**

Instructions for reading *Grass Roots*: Purchase 'stick-on notes' from newsagency. As you read through this wonderful magazine, have on hand your stick-ons and a pen and mark each section that you want to go back to later on. This is an easy reference for future information.

I have **LUFFA SEED** to give away, please send an SAE for information and seed.

For the past 18 months I've been a **REGISTERED WWOOF HOST**. We've had the most interesting people to our home. If you need a hand on your place in return for a comfy bed and good food, join the WWOOF organisation. A group of friends plays cricket the first Sunday of the month at the MCG (Murphys Creek Grounds) and since February this year most of my young WWOOFers have extended their stay to play. They love it. We welcome anyone in the district to play. We take lunch to share, a few drinks and have afternoon tea as well. We've crowned 'Miss Cricket' and 'Queen of the Pitch'.

The majority of my WWOOFers have come from South Korea

(I grow the PNG Birds Eye chilli organically – it's a great draw-card.) and in years to come I'm going to visit South Korea, take cricket gear and have all my WWOOFers meet and play a game of cricket – MCG style.

Lynne Anderson,

Lazy Acres, MURPHYS CREEK 4352.

**Dear GR People,**

Can anyone help with any information on the **DRAGON FRUIT** plant: soil, sun, water etc? Does anyone have seeds of the white variety; I would love to try them. The other thing that I need help with is a **VINE FOR SCREENING OUT THE NEIGHBOURS**. It needs to be evergreen, thick, long lasting and be a fruit or vegetable also. The only ones I can come up with are kiwi fruit and passionfruit. Are there any others?

Greg Nicolls,

10 Bellwood Drv, NAMBUCCA HEADS 2448.

**Dear Megg,**

In GR 156 Abe and Carol have a request for **HELP WITH WASPS**. My limited experience might be useful.

Several years ago I collected waste from a pie shop, included in the waste were Boston buns, which are very tempting to wasps. I was soon having dozens of wasps at 'feed-up time'. My solution was a container of Ant Rid. The contents were stirred through the icing on several Boston buns. About a week later the wasps had vanished.

One of our sons had wasps in a house wall and was advised to use a puffer to blow a coating of an insecticide into a small gap in the brickwork. It took several days and applications of insecticide to eliminate the wasps. Three years ago we had a heavy active infestation of wasps in a fibrocement wall. The point of entry was a very small hole. We were advised to squirt insecticide into the hole, but also to do it at night using a torch with a film of red plastic over the light so as not to disturb the wasps. An adhesive patch over the entry hole completed the job – no more wasps.

I understand some councils will take action where wasps are troublesome; it might be worthwhile approaching your local authority.

In GR 157 Allie of Barmera has a request for information on an **EVERHOT WOOD-FIRED STOVE**. Allie also refers to AGA. If my memory serves me correctly, these were stoves made by two separate companies.

We had an Everhot stove (wood-burning type), which we installed in 1957 and which lasted about 35 years. It was an efficient stove, excellent in turning out well-cooked meals, economical in use of wood fuel, produced warmth for the kitchen and heat for a 100 gallon (455 lt) Everhot hot water service. We also had an electric stove for summer cooking and the hot water service had an electric connection. The stove pictured along with Allie's letter seems identical to our 1957 model. It also did a fine job warming, and on occasion drying damp napkins. We soon learnt that it paid, fuel-wise, to keep the covers on the hot plates when they were not in use.

With regard to the opening for a gas inlet: I've not seen that type of adaptation in use on an Everhot stove. If Allie can contact an engineering works or a local welder, she might be able to get a steel plate made to cover the opening.

Ken Woods,

79 Blake St, SHOREHAM 3916.



Please keep letters brief, clearly written and relevant to self-sufficiency topics. Letters pushing barrows (religious, political or other) will not be published.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Grass Roots,

Would anyone have a **CURE FOR POLYPS**? I have them high up in the nose, near the eyes. I've seen two specialists who say an operation is the only way as there is a risk of blindness. Also, I do have a bleeding problem in that area. Have tried most medical and herbal preparations. The problem is getting worse so I would appreciate any information. I'm in my early 70s, eat healthily and watch my weight, keep mostly to natural cleaners – no perfumes. Thanks for the best mag going; I have quite a collection.

Irene Heyne,  
20 Loveday St, GOOLWA 5214.

Dear Megg & Mary,

Many times *Grass Roots* has provided the answers to my difficulties, but this time as I do not have an index I cannot find the articles in my bookshelves. I would like information on ducks in the vineyard and on sealing the plug hole of a bath so I can grow water chestnuts.

Anne Fitzpatrick,  
39 Bambara Rd, HURSTBRIDGE 3099.

*Ducks are more useful in vegie gardens than a vineyard as they are tops at reducing slug and snail populations. With the exception of the Muscovy, they do not graze grass, though they will consume a little. If there is fruit on the vines, they are likely to try, and probably enjoy, bunches of grapes. Turkeys and guinea fowl will reduce the insect population in vineyards, but all poultry would need to be locked out when grapes form and most definitely as they ripen.*

Dear GR Family,

I am a young single mum living on Flinders Island in Bass Strait and attempting the alternative lifestyle with my two young daughters. I am wanting to hear from anyone who has built a **RAMMED EARTH HOUSE** (load-bearing and nonload-bearing). I really would like to hear your experiences as I've had very little experience in building a house, but I'm still very confident I can do it, especially with the loving support of my family.

Also, I am very interested in **WEAVING** floor mats and wall hangings (to stop the roaring forties from entering our shed), pottery, permaculture, spiritual growth and child rearing with self-sufficiency. I am quite happy to reply to your letters and answer any questions about our beautiful island.



Eliza-Kate Walker,  
PO Box 120, Whitemark,  
FLINDERS ISLAND 7255.

Dear Megg, Mary & Crew,

You all do a fantastic job – it's a great magazine you put together. We (family of five) are on a few acres and are putting together an orchard, vegie garden and a few animals to go with it. I have two specific questions I hope readers will be able to help us with (perhaps even back copies I have not come across yet).

My daughter is very keen on owning a horse, and we would love to **GROW OUR OWN HORSE FEED**. Does anyone have experience in doing this? I would also appreciate any other tips on self-sufficiency or cost cutting concerning keeping a horse. Another point worth mentioning is that we are on the look-out for the right horse for a 12-year-old rider.

Can anyone recommend **BIRD NETTING** to permanently cover an orchard and vegie garden set-up – one that will last, and not perish over time or rip in the wind?

Raelene Harris,  
PO Box 63, STRATHFIELDSAYE 3551.  
Email: harroz5@iinet.net.au

There was a very good article about netting an orchard in GR 148.

Dear GR Folk,

Sorry I couldn't answer all your letters before. I now have the recipe for the fascinating **CRYSTAL GROWING** and coral experiment.

Dot Pyc,  
2/15 North St, MARYBOROUGH 4650.



Dear Readers,

We are finally in a position to make a **MOVE TO TASMANIA**, around September to November. We are excited about being able to live our dream of being self-sufficient, getting back to basics and exploring new friendships. Depending on what we get for our house, we would like a property of 10 – 15 acres. We have had some fairly mixed and negative advice, so if there are any readers who have experienced this kind of transition, who are living our dream, or can offer any kind of advice, we would appreciate all the help we can get.

One issue of concern is that I have a dread of snakes and a cat that chases anything, in fun. We were advised that snakes are prolific on acreage, so might even need to look at buying a large block, if possible near town. We look forward to hearing from you all.

This magazine is a treasure and we enjoy reading it from cover to cover.

Alison Hinds,  
7 Redbank Rd, REDCLIFFE 4020.

Dear Grass Roots,

I would appreciate hearing from anyone who has installed a **COMPOSTING TOILET** in their own home, in particular 'Simply Enviro Loo' has me interested. I would like to know if they really are odourless as I have a really sensitive nose, although healthy organic smells are not a worry. Also, can composting worms be incorporated? If there is a happy Enviro Loo owner who lives not too far from Picton and wouldn't mind me taking a look at theirs, so I can make sure a composting toilet would be the right decision, it would be much appreciated.

I have spent nearly two years knitting my husband a woollen jumper with cables and twists, teaching myself how to knit from a book as I go, only to find I am a few balls short to finish it. It was most disappointing to discover the wool has been discontinued and apparently I am not alone in my plight. If anyone can help, the wool is **CLECKHEATON COUNTRY 8 PLY NATURALS**, 50 grams, colour 1810 Olive, dye lot doesn't matter. I would be happy to pay a good price plus postage to any kind soul who can spare the above wool so I can finally finish my husband's jumper, probably for next winter. Thanks to all at GR.

Julie Gully,  
37 Coachwood Cres, PICTON 2571.

Dear GR Readers,

I have a daughter Ebony who is 16 and she has this really weird thing happening: **ERYTHEMA NODOSUM**. She has had this disease for seven months now.

She has five lumps on her left lower leg that become very inflamed and sore at times. It has not spread to her lungs. She was prescribed a Dispirin once daily by a dermatologist. No one seems to know a lot about it and it is quite a strange occurrence in Australia. Is there anyone who could help with any information at all? I'm hoping a reader might know someone who has erythema nodosum, or perhaps there is someone who has dealt with this. If so, could you please contact us and send information. Thanks so much.



Sharon,  
PO Box 529, RYE 3941.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

**Dear Megg, Mary & GR Family,**

Of all the things that a person could be lucky enough to have in this world, the three things that I have come to appreciate the most in my life are my family, my friends and my freedom. Although the last of these comes to me only in my dreams – be they during my waking hours or while I sleep. You see I am a prisoner who exists at Her Majesty's. Yet I am a person who considers himself one of the most fortunate people alive given that the first two most important things in my life come and visit me nearly each and every weekend. I will love them for all eternity.

However, the reason why I write now is not to thank those whom I obviously love so much, but rather to thank all of you for helping me to receive the third most important thing in my life – my freedom. When I feel I'm at my lowest, and when the concrete and the wire feels as though it is going to engulf me, I pick up a copy of GR and I'm instantly transported to the world that I love. The world where people are kind to each other, where people respect the land and all that she sustains. Instantly I'm back with my friends in Mullum, revegetating the rainforest I love so much, or building a dry-stone wall and laughing as the sunshine strikes my face. Sometimes I'm back with other friends celebrating life and all of Her diversity at The Bello Global Carnival.



One thing my life has taught me is that you will all continue to be with me, no matter where I go to sleep at night, or where I wake the next day. Peace, love, freedom and happiness to you all. May we meet again some day soon.

**Mark Chesterfield,  
C/- PO Box 431,  
ARARAT 3377.**

**Dear GR & Wonderful Readers,**

I write to you again searching for help and maybe some answers. My challenge started 10 years ago when my two-year-old child began to be excessively defiant, overly demanding and consistently in trouble. In grade one he was diagnosed with ADD. This was 1998 and we lived in the USA. Since moving to Australia in 1999, our son has been diagnosed with #1 normalcy, #2 bipolar (also known as manic depression) and #3 ODD (Oppositional Defiance Disorder). He has been on medications such as Ritalin, Epilim and Haloperadol. Even with these medications he is at the very least defiant. He has had reiki, kinesiology, bowen therapy, meditation, aromatherapy, dietary restructuring (no sweets, no junk foods, only fresh vegetables and meats); he refused to eat fruits, period. We feed all of our children three balanced meals a day consisting of the four food groups.

Still our son's behaviour continues to deteriorate. We have even changed our attitude, trying to help our son, even though we believe that he is the one that needs the attitude adjustment. Even though spanking has never done anything to improve his behaviour, sometimes we still use it. The last thing my husband and I want to do is have our 12-year-old son leave home, however, we do not feel there is anything more we can do for him. So it is with a heavy heart that I write this letter. There seems to be only one thing that makes our son show some true passion and something that he seems to thrive on. He loves to be near, on and around horses, animals of any kind, he loves planting seeds and doing hands-on work. He is always working with ropes wanting to try and create something. This is where his heart really is. Unfortunately, we cannot provide this for him as my husband is

near retirement and we cannot afford to forfeit one for the other.

I am asking if anyone knows of any property or camp where my husband and I could pay for the room and board until he learns the ropes. Any help or assistance in this matter would be greatly appreciated.



**Shawnnita Fairbairn,  
PO Box 250, MORANBAH 4744.  
Ph: 07-4941-8255.**

**Email: denishawnnita@bigpond.com**

**Dear GR Friends,**

I am writing hoping someone can help me. I am desperately trying to find some **POTATO ONIONS**. They are mentioned a lot on 'Gardening Australia' on TV and in their various publications and although I have seed catalogues from Eden, Phoenix, New Gippsland and Green Harvest, none of these stock them. I would appreciate it if anyone could tell me where to find them, or if you have some to spare I will gladly pay for them including postage.

**Robyn Drummmond,  
'Kanangra', RMB 116, KOOTINGAI. 2352.**

**Dear Megg & Grass Rooters,**

Great magazine. Can anyone help us with a couple of recipes. They are for **MAKING SALAMI** (hot and mild) and **CURING BACON**. The old recipe used salt and treacle, but we don't know the amounts. If someone can help us we would be very grateful. Even different recipes for these will be appreciated.

**Phyll & Brian,  
Klinghur St, WIANGARE 2474.**

**Dear Grass Roots,**

In years up until 1975 I was a chronic **HAY FEVER SUFFERER** and was prescribed all the different antihistamines in the pharmaceutical armoury. During the seasons I would be unable to go to work on many days. In spring that year I was introduced to a biochemist in Wagga Wagga who had the right preparations to relieve the problem.

The next year an ad in the *Border Morning Mail* asked for volunteers for a survey of sufferers of pollen related allergies to undergo tests for the NSW Government Health Department. With the blessing of my employer I was able to go, without loss of pay. The test was given for 32 different pollens and I reacted to 31 of them, so I became a valued subject. As a result I was invited to go for the next two years and participate with further testing.

During 1978 the doctor revealed that a pollen catcher was set up on the top of the Travelodge Motel (now Country Comfort Motel) in Dean Street. In the catcher they were gathering pollen from all the crops and grasses and flowering trees west of Albury. To their surprise, a good percentage of the pollen was from plants in the Adelaide Hills. It was these pollens that made the district a hot spot for allergies.

I have for some time been concerned about the introduction of GM crops and the claims that they will not affect the surrounding organic and regular crops. Over the years I have met farmers who were trying to grow organic crops and they have almost all complained about neighbours who use nonorganic sprays and fertilisers as they blow over the fence and contaminate their crops. Surely the experience I've related about how far pollen can travel on the wind must add to concerns about where pollen from GM crops will end up.

**Neville Whyte,  
Ph: 03-5722-3380.**

Anonymous letters will not be published. Please indicate if you would like personal details to be withheld.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

**Dear Grass Roots Friends,**

After years of benefiting from your wonderful publication, I'm finally writing for help from readers. I've just moved from Victoria to this small **ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY IN OUT-BACK WA** as voluntary coordinator of the local (very underfunded) Aboriginal Women's Culture Centre. Balgo Hills is about 250 kilometres from Halls Creek and about 840 kilometres from Alice Springs, very different from my last permanent home in the Dandenongs near Melbourne. It's world-famous for the wonderful art the residents produce, but the community also has the usual problems that go with dispossessed people of different language groups artificially brought together (originally as a Catholic mission).

I'd love to hear from like-minded people around here (if there are any). Living on the edge of the desert is proving a huge challenge to this dedicated veggie and herb grower. The wind is almost constant, the soil ranges from fine, red, dusty sand at the other end of the community to hard rocky sand at my end.

I've been here three months now and have planted a number of food plants. To stop everything blowing away I'm making small environments with rocks, potting mix, local sand and powdered dry horse manure – plenty of that around because of the wild horses.

I've made a compost enclosure with corrugated iron to stop it blowing away and also keep the local dogs out of it; they dug up the bay tree the first time I planted it to get at the half-rotted banana peels I'd put underneath. Dogs here eat anything and everything, so I mulch with rocks now – I'd give anything for just one bale of straw or lucerne hay, but I hear that even close to cities this is either unobtainable or outrageously expensive because of this terrible drought.

I'd really like to hear from anyone with experience in growing anything at all in such a dry, windy climate, especially what fast-growing trees would do well here. There's plenty of water from underground, but I don't know what the calcium salts in it are doing to the plants. The leafy tops of some of the seedlings just fell off and even leaves on the shrubs seemed a bit burnt by the water, so I'm now trickle-watering the roots only, rather than using the sprinkler. I've been told I can grow mangos, rock melons and avocados here – any other suggestions for fruit? I'm trying to sprout some grape seeds, but I don't anticipate they'll bear; I just need the vines to cover the wire mesh fences around my house and give a bit of shelter and shade. I want to grow as much as I can because fresh fruit and vegies are hard to come by here and very expensive. I'd appreciate any advice, but please no visitors except by prior arrangement as this is Aboriginal Land and permission has to be asked of the locals first.



**Judith 'Nampitjin' Power,**  
PMB 308, Balgo Hills via HALLS CREEK 6770.

Ph: 08-9168-8383.

Email: nampitjin@hotmail

**Dear GR Readers,**

First of all a big thanks to all who have and continue to reply to my letter published in GR 158. I am endeavouring to reply to all, so if you haven't heard from me yet it won't be long.

I have a couple more questions I would like help with. When I very first started buying the mag I lent a copy to a friend I no longer see and never got it back. In it was an article on an **ALTER-NATIVE TO SHOP-BOUGHT BAKING POWDER** without the nasties, probably about two to three years ago. If anyone could tell me the issue number or send me a photocopy of the article it would be much appreciated.

Second, I have read various short articles on **GROWING YOUR OWN SPROUTS**, but I was hoping to get more in-depth

detail. I have read a couple of articles that go over the basics of growing sprouts indoors, but I would like the specifics of which beans/seeds produce which sprouts, are they suitable for eating raw, stir-frying, salads etc? Any special properties that may be attributed to them?

In response to people who enquired where I got my *Camellia sinensis* bushes from: Camellia Lodge Nursery, 310 Princess Highway, Officer, Vic, ph: 03-5943-2500. The general consensus to my 'how do I **PROCESS GREEN TEA**?' question so far seems to be astoundingly simple! Pick the newest leaves from the growth tips. Use whatever drying method you prefer, then crunch up the dried leaves. Hey presto – green tea! For oolong or black tea, ferment leaves before drying. This is basically what I thought was the case, but couldn't believe it would be so simple. Who needs modern technology?

**Sharyn McDonald,**  
10 Terry St, PEARCEDALE 3912.

**Dear Megg & Co,**

Happy anniversary to you all. We are grateful to you for giving us a cheerful, helpful, wonderfully informative magazine, and we are proud of you for keeping it up in spite of many difficulties. I have been reading the mag since 1981.

Even though I had my 80th birthday in May, I am determined to see my dream of having a sustainable ecohouse and organic garden of my own come to realisation. I try to live one day at a time now, knowing that love and hope never die and our spirits can't be bought or sold. God bless all who write those wonderful letters in Feedback and tell us how to live more simply, lighten our loads and have a good laugh.

I raise my glass to you Megg, Suni, David and all of you, wishing you many happy birthdays and Christmases to come, with love and happiness forever.



**Lia Capri,**  
7 Mowatt St, QUEANBEYAN 2620.

**Dear GRs,**

Here are some contact details about matters readers often ask about.

Letters asking for knitting patterns for baby clothes and unusual garments could try Patons and Shepherd, freecall: 1800-333-642, or Panda and Cleckheaton on freecall: 1800-337-032.

A good book about sensible foods and way of life is *A Man Who Lived in Three Centuries* by Roger French. It is available from the publishers: Natural Health Society of Australia, 28/541 High St, Penrith 2750. Ph: 02-4721-5068. The cost is \$29.50 including postage.

The Public Trustee is very helpful in all matters pertaining to wills. The NSW number is: 1300-364-103.

For advice on home funerals email: fivespotfilms@yahoo.com

I don't watch much TV, but there are some shows I'm addicted to, such as 'Global Village' on SBS, and 'Dr Phil' on Channel 9. Dr Phil McGrath is the one hope that many people all over the world have of being happy. Through his books and TV shows he has managed to make me and many friends happier and that's a fact. He's like a compass. He can point you in the right direction when you are lost, confused, grieving, hurt or any number of other emotions all of us feel at some time in our lives. Not many people can do that. So keep an eye out for the books and TV programs. After two weeks you won't want to go back to your negative behaviour, guaranteed.

**Roberino,**  
PO Box 359, WOOLGOOLGA 2456.





# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

## Dear GR Readers,

In reply to YG, GR 157: I too had a lump in my breast caused from **MILK DUCTS**. After seeing many doctors over the years and being assured it was harmless, I started using Anna's Wild Yam Cream because of the onset of menopause. I did rub the cream over my breasts unaware, until a few weeks later, that it had dissolved the lump. A friend had many similar lumps that disappeared when she used a similar cream. She then found a hard lump, which turned out to be cancer. Her doctor said that it had been hidden behind the milk duct lumps and when they had been dissolved by the cream the cancer became visible. Her cancer was found in time, I might add.

I think it goes without saying though, any lumps in your breasts need to be examined by a doctor. Please don't just use the yam cream when you have not had the lump diagnosed, it is just too risky. But, for those of you who have ruled out other reasons, the yam cream is great and does work.

In reply to Skye from Shepparton: I too have **ARTHRITIS** and, not wanting to take the medication conventional medics prescribe, along with warnings of stomach ulcers, kidney and liver damage, I embarked on a search for an alternative treatment. The tablets I found that work best for me were Cararthron. They are expensive, but I find I really feel the difference if I stop taking them. They contain: *Trichosanthes kirilowii* root (Chinese snakegourd), *Clematis sinensis* root (now known as *Clematis chinensis*) and *Prunella vulgaris* flower (self heal).

It is also important to keep up a good diet, free from sugar, dairy and wheat products, making sure you get enough calcium from other sources. Once I was able to move without pain again exercise was important.

Good luck with your quilting Skye. My craftwork is mainly making soft dolls, bears and toys from recycled materials. It kept me from going insane at the time when I was in too much pain to do anything else. I gained a lot of pleasure from poring over craft magazines and library books, planning and then making my creations.

I want to add that if anyone disagrees with what I have suggested, please feel free to advise. I am not highly educated and would not want to advise wrongly.

I would like to also ask for advice about recycled tyres being processed into material that could be used for cladding a house. I have seen this material on some TV renovation programs in the form of edges for gardens. I think it is a wonderful way to recycle tyres, but have you heard of it being made into sheets? Would appreciate any information on this subject as we are about to renovate an old fibro cottage and want to use as many recycled products as possible.



Patricia Fisher,  
PO Box 365, GLASSHOUSE  
MOUNTAINS 4518.

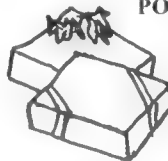
## Dear Grass Rooters,

Does anyone share my frustration when told by people how much they love nature yet they still pour bleach down their toilet? And how they can't afford to buy eco-friendly washing detergent. Becoming one with the earth is not only a spiritual connection, it has to be a connection at grass roots level too. You reap what you sow!

I love reading GR and find comfort in the fact that I'm not alone in being concerned about the air we breathe and what goes down our drains. The more people who read this mag, the more ideas are

shared, which inspires people to treat our earth with more respect. Subscriptions make great gifts for birthdays, weddings or anyone you think worthy of such a fine read.

Can anyone send me info on **BUILDING YOUR OWN COMPOSTING TOILET**? Did you get council approval? Any ideas would be appreciated.



Lee Wells,  
Morgan St, MANY PEAKS 4680.  
There is an article on a home-built composting toilet in GR 109.

## Dear GRs,

John Sierakowski: I found a leaflet containing the numbers of food additives followed by an explanation of what the additive was. Believe me it's mind-boggling. Melanie Mobers: I am wildlife licensed. May I suggest checking with your local department of Natural Resources and Environment? For the better part you cannot take anything from the wild in any state; you must therefore acquire a licence and within the paperwork you may find a kangaroo listed. Your next measure, therefore, is to seek someone who has a wildlife licence and sells these creatures. However, you will not be permitted to cull them for meat for your dogs. May I suggest you try sheep instead?

Keeping snakes out of your pens is near impossible. You can try concrete flooring and small-holed bird wire, the smaller the better. If you are building your own pen, make sure the tin is at least 30 centimetres into the ground. You will also have to make tin for fitting around the areas of the wire down at the bottom of the pen, again 30 centimetres into the ground and at least the same above ground.

As for spiders; they are portable fly catchers remember. The daddy-longlegs are predators of the redback spider. The more of these you have the less redbacks.

Lost children: I don't have a lost child, I am one. I have a very painful story to tell of a lost child, a weapon used still to this present day that has isolated me from other half-brothers and sisters and from both parents, scared to make contact for fear of what it may produce as their war continues to this day. So much entangled in revenge that even my birth certificate was stricken from all records. No I don't even have a legal name. Look at your children's faces and think just what they are really worth. Please think very carefully as children can soon learn to hate at a very young age. If you wish to write to me I would tell my story. I feel if it can help any other family to understand then what I have been through was not a waste and history will not repeat.

Julie Todd,  
10 Prince St, STAWELL 3380.

## Dear Megg & Grass Rooters,

I was reading issue 158 and saw the request by E Baker of Devonport for a **LEMON BUTTER RECIPE** that uses butter. The following is my recipe. I have never had a bad batch from it, which is good seeing as the ingredients aren't really cheap unless you raise your own supplies.

To make two cups of lemon butter you need 4 lemons, 3 eggs, 1 1/4 cups of sugar, 90 grams of butter (diced). Squeeze lemons to make 2/3 cup of lemon juice. Process eggs for approximately 5 seconds. Add sugar and lemon juice, process until combined. Pour liquid into a saucepan (I use a double saucepan) and add butter. Stir over a low heat until mixture coats the back of the wooden spoon. Pour into sterilised jars. I use two glasses that came originally with jam in them. Refrigerate when cooled.

Lori Mansfield,  
C/- Post Office, BOOLARRA 3870.

Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Readers,

Even during a casual visit to a hardware store one can't help but notice all the cheap and in some cases, very cheap **ELECTRICAL POWER TOOLS**, both battery and mains operated. If all the use these tools are required for is to hang the odd picture, or perhaps install an occasional shelf, then they will probably last a lifetime in the bottom of a cupboard. However, if they are going to be needed regularly, these tools will most likely fail fairly quickly. Simply put, you are going to have to keep replacing them, which, of course, is false economy. So, for someone who intends to set up a workshop or sewing and craft room it makes absolute sense to buy the best you can afford: you generally get what you pay for.

My advice is to observe what tradespeople use, both locally and on the TV programs. These tools and machines are used daily and unreliability isn't tolerated. So these are the ones to consider buying, even though the price may lead to mild shock. It will surely pay in the end and there's also the comforting knowledge that they'll be with you for a long, long time. No contest is there!

Alan Stewart,

12 Weymouth Plc, ALEXANDRA HILLS 4161.

Dear GR,

We have been buying the magazine for some time and thoroughly enjoy reading all the helpful information and ideas. I have written twice now in response to letters from two readers offering recipes and information with regard to **MAKING NATURAL SOAP**; neither one has responded. I can't help but wonder why these people bother to offer assistance when it appears they have no intention of doing so.



D DeYoung,  
MARYBOROUGH 4650.

Dear Megg & Mary,

Firstly, I must say you all do an excellent job – keep it up. I am sure there are some people like me who did not read the magazine much. Where Feedback was concerned I used to say to my husband, 'What's the point, you never know when the replies to queries are going to be in'. However, once I started to read the mag from cover to cover, I realised there was a lot of information requested and given, particularly in Feedback, so I am hooked. I hope my info to some readers (GR 158) will help.

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the plant movement. It's very much cheaper than Velcro. I always have 'bracelets' of cut pantyhose on my wrists when in the garden.

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Shirley Arendt,

PO Box 50, PIANGIL 3597.

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Angela, Alan & Kriya,

2/83 Caloola Drv, TWEED HEADS 2485.

Dear Megg & Crew,

My husband and I live on five acres in Yass, NSW. We are currently experimenting with olive trees and have planted a few of each variety, therefore we will have an oversupply of **OLIVES**. We were wondering if any readers had any information on propagating, growing, cooking or making olive oil!



Allison Rodgers,

PO Box 609, YASS 2582.

Email: [rodgersfamily@dodo.com.au](mailto:rodgersfamily@dodo.com.au)

Dear GR & Readers,

I've only been reading GR for a few years, since I discovered gardening organically. I read everything I could find on the subject and had many failures in the vegie garden until I realised that much of what is written on organic **VEGIE GARDENING** is not valid for the **TROPICS**! That's why I love the articles by Jane 'Many Leaves' Lawrance from Babinda, Queensland (truly the tropics!). Our prime vegie growing season is winter when things don't bolt to seed in the heat and the temperature actually promotes flowering for peas etc. In summer, when southern gardeners are excited about their vegie patches, the heat and the torrential rain makes many things just impossible to grow (and physical labour in the sun is not enjoyable). So planting advice and varieties recommended in many books are unsuitable. The more unconventional varieties are better for the tropics and now I just don't bother with many traditional vegies.

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Anne Sumpter,

CMB FALLEIGH via MACKAY 4741.

*Anne, we'd love to hear about the vegies you have had success with in the tropics.*

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

## Dear GR Readers,

In reply to YG, GR 157: I too had a lump in my breast caused from **MILK DUCTS**. After seeing many doctors over the years and being assured it was harmless, I started using Anna's Wild Yam Cream because of the onset of menopause. I did rub the cream over my breasts unaware, until a few weeks later, that it had dissolved the lump. A friend had many similar lumps that disappeared when she used a similar cream. She then found a hard lump, which turned out to be cancer. Her doctor said that it had been hidden behind the milk duct lumps and when they had been dissolved by the cream the cancer became visible. Her cancer was found in time, I might add.

I think it goes without saying though, any lumps in your breasts need to be examined by a doctor. Please don't just use the yam cream when you have not had the lump diagnosed, it is just too risky. But, for those of you who have ruled out other reasons, the yam cream is great and does work.

In reply to Skye from Shepparton: I too have **ARTHRITIS** and, not wanting to take the medication conventional medics prescribe, along with warnings of stomach ulcers, kidney and liver damage, I embarked on a search for an alternative treatment. The tablets I found that work best for me were Cararthron. They are expensive, but I find I really feel the difference if I stop taking them. They contain: *Trichosanthes kirilowii* root (Chinese snakegourd), *Clematis sinensis* root (now known as *Clematis chinensis*) and *Prunella vulgaris* flower (self heal).

It is also important to keep up a good diet, free from sugar, dairy and wheat products, making sure you get enough calcium from other sources. Once I was able to move without pain again exercise was important.

Good luck with your quilting Skye. My craftwork is mainly making soft dolls, bears and toys from recycled materials. It kept me from going insane at the time when I was in too much pain to do anything else. I gained a lot of pleasure from poring over craft magazines and library books, planning and then making my creations.

I want to add that if anyone disagrees with what I have suggested, please feel free to advise. I am not highly educated and would not want to advise wrongly.

I would like to also ask for advice about recycled tyres being processed into material that could be used for cladding a house. I have seen this material on some TV renovation programs in the form of edges for gardens. I think it is a wonderful way to recycle tyres, but have you heard of it being made into sheets? Would appreciate any information on this subject as we are about to renovate an old fibro cottage and want to use as many recycled products as possible.



Patricia Fisher,  
PO Box 365, GLASSHOUSE  
MOUNTAINS 4518.

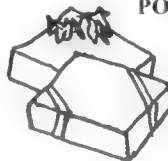
## Dear Grass Rooters,

Does anyone share my frustration when told by people how much they love nature yet they still pour bleach down their toilet? And how they can't afford to buy eco-friendly washing detergent. Becoming one with the earth is not only a spiritual connection, it has to be a connection at grass roots level too. You reap what you sow!

I love reading GR and find comfort in the fact that I'm not alone in being concerned about the air we breathe and what goes down our drains. The more people who read this mag, the more ideas are

shared, which inspires people to treat our earth with more respect. Subscriptions make great gifts for birthdays, weddings or anyone you think worthy of such a fine read.

Can anyone send me info on **BUILDING YOUR OWN COMPOSTING TOILET**? Did you get council approval? Any ideas would be appreciated.



Lee Wells,  
Morgan St, MANY PEAKS 4680.  
There is an article on a home-built composting toilet in GR 109.

## Dear GRs,

John Sierakowski: I found a leaflet containing the numbers of food additives followed by an explanation of what the additive was. Believe me it's mind-boggling. Melanie Mobers: I am wildlife licensed. May I suggest checking with your local department of Natural Resources and Environment? For the better part you cannot take anything from the wild in any state; you must therefore acquire a licence and within the paperwork you may find a kangaroo listed. Your next measure, therefore, is to seek someone who has a wildlife licence and sells these creatures. However, you will not be permitted to cull them for meat for your dogs. May I suggest you try sheep instead?

Keeping snakes out of your pens is near impossible. You can try concrete flooring and small-holed bird wire, the smaller the better. If you are building your own pen, make sure the tin is at least 30 centimetres into the ground. You will also have to make tin for fitting around the areas of the wire down at the bottom of the pen, again 30 centimetres into the ground and at least the same above ground.

As for spiders; they are portable fly catchers remember. The daddy-longlegs are predators of the redback spider. The more of these you have the less redbacks.

Lost children: I don't have a lost child, I am one. I have a very painful story to tell of a lost child, a weapon used still to this present day that has isolated me from other half-brothers and sisters and from both parents, scared to make contact for fear of what it may produce as their war continues to this day. So much entangled in revenge that even my birth certificate was stricken from all records. No I don't even have a legal name. Look at your children's faces and think just what they are really worth. Please think very carefully as children can soon learn to hate at a very young age. If you wish to write to me I would tell my story. I feel if it can help any other family to understand then what I have been through was not a waste and history will not repeat.

Julie Todd,  
10 Prince St, STAWELL 3380.

## Dear Megg & Grass Rooters,

I was reading issue 158 and saw the request by E Baker of Devonport for a **LEMON BUTTER RECIPE** that uses butter. The following is my recipe. I have never had a bad batch from it, which is good seeing as the ingredients aren't really cheap unless you raise your own supplies.

To make two cups of lemon butter you need 4 lemons, 3 eggs, 1 1/4 cups of sugar, 90 grams of butter (diced). Squeeze lemons to make 2/3 cup of lemon juice. Process eggs for approximately 5 seconds. Add sugar and lemon juice, process until combined. Pour liquid into a saucepan (I use a double saucepan) and add butter. Stir over a low heat until mixture coats the back of the wooden spoon. Pour into sterilised jars. I use two glasses that came originally with jam in them. Refrigerate when cooled.

Lori Mansfield,  
C/- Post Office, BOOLARRA 3870.

Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Readers,

Even during a casual visit to a hardware store one can't help but notice all the cheap and in some cases, very cheap **ELECTRICAL POWER TOOLS**, both battery and mains operated. If all the use these tools are required for is to hang the odd picture, or perhaps install an occasional shelf, then they will probably last a lifetime in the bottom of a cupboard. However, if they are going to be needed regularly, these tools will most likely fail fairly quickly. Simply put, you are going to have to keep replacing them, which, of course, is false economy. So, for someone who intends to set up a workshop or sewing and craft room it makes absolute sense to buy the best you can afford: you generally get what you pay for.

My advice is to observe what tradespeople use, both locally and on the TV programs. These tools and machines are used daily and unreliability isn't tolerated. So these are the ones to consider buying, even though the price may lead to mild shock. It will surely pay in the end and there's also the comforting knowledge that they'll be with you for a long, long time. No contest is there!

Alan Stewart,

12 Weymouth Plc, ALEXANDRA HILLS 4161.

Dear GR,

We have been buying the magazine for some time and thoroughly enjoy reading all the helpful information and ideas. I have written twice now in response to letters from two readers offering recipes and information with regard to **MAKING NATURAL SOAP**; neither one has responded. I can't help but wonder why these people bother to offer assistance when it appears they have no intention of doing so.



D DeYoung,  
MARYBOROUGH 4650.

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CMB FALLEIGH via MACKAY 4741.

*Anne, we'd love to hear about the vegies you have had success with in the tropics.*



# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Readers,

I'm so pleased to read about others who manage to overcome difficulties to do what they believe in. All my efforts have been, and are still being, blocked at every turn. After 20 years I feel like just giving up. Any sane person would.

I do have a request. Can any readers please give me **INFORMATION ABOUT BENDIGO** and surrounding areas? I had thought about moving to that area, but I would like to find out about land and prices, rainfall, rates, climate, flooding, transport, services and schools etc. Please convince me to move to the area. I would welcome information by mail or Internet, even just words of support. Thank you for the opportunity to ask for help and support.

Gael Boyes,

Email: gaelboyes@hotmail.com

Dear Grass Roots,

I have five canaries, two of which are now nesting. I don't like keeping birds in captivity, but know that if I release them they will not survive. I would like to separate the males and the females so they do not keep breeding more birds into captivity. I only have one aviary to house them and therefore am not able to separate them. I would like to give one gender only away to a good home where they will have a large area to live out their lives. If you can provide a **GOOD HOME FOR MY CANARIES** and will not be breeding them, please contact me by phone or email.

Avigail Stone,

Ph: 03-9533-0850.

Email: avistone@hotmail.com



Dear Readers,

One of north Queensland's best kept secrets is the **LIFESTYLE AND CLIMATE ENJOYED AT MT FOX**. Mt Fox is an hour's drive south-west of Ingham and is located on top of the Seaview Range, some 800 metres above sea level. Because of this it enjoys a mild climate and low levels of humidity.

One of the central features of this community is the school, which provides a high level of primary education to its students in a beautiful country setting. The small size of the school allows programs to be closely aligned with students' individual needs and the high level of resourcing enhances the delivery of these programs. The school is also a focal point for the community because it is the only public building in the area and so is used frequently for community meetings and social events. Groups such as the local Landcare committee, the volunteer fire brigade and the Mt Fox Community Group all use the school facilities.

Unfortunately, we are now facing the prospect of the school closing because of low enrolments, so we are looking for people who might be thinking of making a sea change with a rural bent. The area offers seclusion, peace and quiet and a good education for primary school children, yet it is close to many of north Queensland's major tourist destinations. There are currently houses available for rent and blocks of land for sale. If you would like more information, please feel free to contact the school as follows.

Mt Fox State School,

MS 702, INGHAM, QLD 4850.

Ph: 07-4777-5124, fax: 07-4777-5177.

Email: the.principal@mtfoxss.eq.edu.au

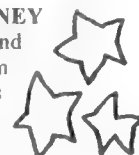


Dear GRs,

I'm coming home! After more than 10 years in New Zealand, I have become increasingly homesick for Australia. Our family has decided to move across the Tasman. My Kiwi husband and two NZ-born sons and I hope to relocate in autumn 2004. We are con-

sidering the eastern seaboard **BETWEEN SYDNEY AND BRISBANE** at this stage. I have lived and

worked on the mid north coast previously so am quite familiar with the area, though no doubt it has changed much during my time away. We would appreciate any advice or recommendations from readers re localities to move to, opportunities available, job prospects, schools etc. We are open to ideas and may just end up putting a pin on a map and trying our luck.



J Turner,

24 Glencairn Rd, TWIZEL 8773, NEW ZEALAND.

Dear Grass Roots,

Can anyone possibly help me? I have **FACIAL NEURALGIA** and am on a lot of drugs, which help a little but not much. I am in pain or discomfort all the time. Has anyone had success with anything natural or does anyone know of a good naturopath who has experience with this?

Mrs Linda Woodward,

43 Tamworth Rd, KILSYTH 3137.

Dear GR Readers,

My 2 daughters (11 and 15) have suffered form **IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME** for over a year now. Can any readers out there send me any advice or recipes to help my girls manage this condition? My 15-year-old especially is losing vast quantities of weight due to her restrictive diet. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Marguerite Wilde,

56 Mahogany Cres, GATESHEAD 2290.

Dear GR,

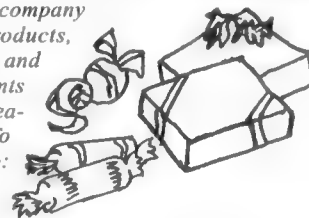
After discovering recently that I am still sensitive to laurel/laureth sulphate, I had to change my washing powder, as it is the foaming agent in washing powders, toothpaste, shampoo. Advance washing powder is the only packaged product I can find that does not contain it – apart from Lux, which is now a 'discontinued line' at Coles. Advance is also hard to find and I have had to ask my local store if they can stock it. I also use hemp oil shampoo and conditioner. The shampoo is free of laurel sulphate, and does a better job of cleaning my hair than most. It is expensive, but only a small amount is required. However, I have yet to find a toothpaste that doesn't include it. Perhaps Eugenio Muratore (GR 158) could try Advance – it still produces plenty of foam, but might suit him.

To Sandy in GR 158: I have chronic acne and was recently told I had 'liver problems', both of which should be helped by taking emu oil capsules. They have helped with both problems, and also with my arthritis. Maybe Sharyn's daughter would be helped by them too. They are available from: Try It Emu Farm, PO Box 52, Marburg, Qld 4346.

Jo McRae,

5 Langford Crt, LENA VALLEY 7008.

*The Golden Glow mail order company sells many 'healthy home' products, including shampoo, conditioner and toothpaste without the ingredients you need to avoid. Prices are reasonable, service is very good. To obtain a catalogue write to: Golden Glow, Reply Paid 45, Virginia BC, Qld 4014.*



Please keep letters brief, clearly written and relevant to self-sufficiency topics. Letters pushing barrows (religious, political or other) will not be published.

# GARDEN BIODIVERSITY

## A Bird Eat Bug World

by Mary Horsfall, Euroa, Vic.

We are all aware of Australia's poor record of species extinctions since European settlement. Continuing human development places ever more pressure on natural ecosystems, leading to habitat loss and fragmentation, pollution, water degradation, salinity, soil acidity, toxic algal blooms – the list goes on. All of these environmental problems contribute to biodiversity loss. The 2002 *Australian Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment* paints a gloomy picture. It identifies 2891 threatened ecosystems and a total of 1595 threatened species, with vegetation clearing being cited as the most significant threat to species and ecosystems in eastern Australia.

The Assessment acknowledges that the task of biodiversity conservation is large and growing and that a 'whole of landscape approach is essential if Australia is to address the decline in biodiversity and maintain ecological processes'.

Enter, our gardens. Government departments, catchment management authorities, businesses and large landowners have a huge role to play in biodiversity conservation. But we too, in our small ways, can contribute.

It's worth bearing in mind that although we might be aiming to encourage conservation of indigenous biodiversity in the garden, much of the biodiversity found in our gardens (indeed, just about everywhere else as well) is introduced. This is not all bad news. Most of our garden earthworms, for example, that are so important in maintaining soil fertility, are introduced – Australia's native earthworm species do not, apparently, thrive in garden conditions.

Any garden will contain a variety of introduced birds, insects, even mammals, and, of course, there will be the ornamental flowers, trees, shrubs, herbs and vegies that we have chosen to plant, no doubt along with many weed species.



Our gardens give us the opportunity to mimic natural ecosystems and encourage biodiversity.

All this does not rule out our ability to incorporate indigenous flora and attract native fauna species.

### START WITH THE SOIL

Biodiversity is about much more than koalas and bilbies. The cute and cuddly looking are the creatures that usually get the good press, but, in reality, it's the bugs and beetles and creepy-crawlies, and the unimaginable millions of micro-organisms that are the real powerhouses of biodiversity.

The soil and its protectant mulch covering are teeming with life, most of it microscopic. The visible life forms include earthworms, springtails, beetles, spiders, ants, mites, termites and numerous others. As well as these there are myriad micro-organisms such as bacteria, fungi, viruses, protozoa and algae.

All these soil and surface biota are

responsible for generating and maintaining soil fertility. One result of all their complex interactions is the process of decay, where the soil covering, the mulch, decomposes to fuel new life, including everything we grow in our gardens. Without this process, also known as an ecosystem service, not only would ecosystems break down, but we humans quite literally could not survive.

The first step to biodiversity conservation in the garden is to protect the soil. Use mulch to encourage the activities of all the beneficial soil and surface biota. Either don't dig, or do so as little as possible, because digging disrupts the balance of micro-organisms. Avoid using synthetic chemicals of all sorts, these kill soil biota. Organic gardening practices protect the soil and increase fertility without the need for artificial fertilisers. Make your own compost from garden and household waste and use animal manures, vermicast, seaweed products and rock dust to enhance fertility.

### ABUZZ WITH LIFE

Organic practices will also encourage beneficial predator insects to your garden that will help control pest species, and become, in their turn, tucker for birds or frogs. Many predatory insects are dependent on nectar from flowers

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A good mix of features aids biodiversity.

at stages of their life cycles, so plant a variety of flowers year-round to attract them. As a bonus, they will pollinate our plants as they feed.

It's humbling to note that plants do not put so much of their energy into producing flowers simply for our delight. Flower production is part of an ongoing evolutionary process to attract pollinators (these might be insects, birds or small marsupials) and ensure the plant's survival. Different pollinators are attracted to different coloured flowers; the flower shape, perfume and position on the plant also have a role in attracting pollinators.

What this means to us is that gardens with restricted colour schemes and few plant species, although they might conform to a short-term human idea of 'good taste', will not taste so good to many pollinators and will be correspondingly poor in insect, bird, reptile and small marsupial species. Likewise, gardens that rely heavily on

the architectural structure given by box hedges, mondo grass and plaited ficus trees, will be very poor in terms of biodiversity. If we want our gardens to be havens of biodiversity, buzzing with insects (natural pest controllers) and full of birdsong and frog call, variety of flowering plants is the key.

### SECRET NICHES, SCRUBBY CORNERS

Fauna we might want to attract to our gardens needs habitat as well as food. Fallen branches, rocks and hollow sections of pipe will provide niches for lizards, frogs, insects and maybe small marsupials. A garden pond will provide water, shade and a cool spot for insects, birds and frogs.

While we probably don't want our gardens to resemble overgrown tangled jungle, birds will appreciate a scrubby inaccessible area to nest safely in. Some bird and insect species will also appreciate a corner of grass left to grow tall and go to seed.

Indigenous plants will tend to attract indigenous fauna. While many birds, insects and small native marsupials do have specific food and habitat requirements, many others are generalists that will take advantage of what is provided by exotic garden plants. Honeyeaters, for example will enjoy the nectar of salvias, red-hot poker and other non-natives and will also eat a range of insects.

Do ensure that birds and other animals you might attract are safe from domestic pets.

### IT'S A BIRD EAT BUG WORLD

From the ground up, everything in the

### ATTRACTIVE PLANTS

To attract honeyeaters and other nectar feeding birds plant grevilleas, banksias, kangaroo paws, callistemons, salvias, red-hot poker, penstemons, yuccas, buddleias, strelitzias, proteas, camellias.

Attract seed-eating birds with grasses, banksias, wattles, casuarinas, conifers, eucalypts, tea trees.

Attract fruit-eating birds with lilly pilly, bangalow palm, wild cherry, blueberry ash.

Nectar-feeding and pollen-collecting insects will be attracted by most of the same flowers as nectar-feeding birds. They will also be attracted to erigeron, alyssum, borage, bergamot, tea tree, parsley and carrot plants in flower, and any open daisy-like flowers. ♀

garden eats something else to survive. Even at a microscopic level within the soil the algae, bacteria and viruses are feeding off each other and their life cycles are adding to the soil's fertility.

On the visible scale, birds and spiders are eating insects, insects are eating each other, frogs and lizards eat insects (and sometimes each other). If we provide a healthy soil teeming with life and plant flora that will attract birds and pollinating insects, one thing leads to another, everything eats something else and our gardens can become ecosystems of amazing biodiversity.

Next time, more specifics on how to encourage biodiversity in different types of gardens. ♀



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## KIDS PAGE CELEBRATE!



Many cultural and religious celebrations occur at this time of year, Christmas being the traditional celebration here in Australia. Time with family and friends, special foods, gifts and decorations are often features of cultural and religious holidays and this page has some fantastic ideas for these. *Ramadan* (Muslim), *Kwanzaa* (African), *Hanukkah* (Jewish) and *Omisoka* (Japanese) are some of the other celebrations that occur around December. See what you can find out about the ways these important times are celebrated around the world.

### Make An Advent Calendar

Advent is the Latin word for arrival and advent calendars are a great way to enjoy the lead-up to the arrival of Christmas day.

#### You will need:

- A length of tinsel
- 24 pieces of ribbon
- paper
- cellophane
- marking pens
- edible treats (optional)



Cut paper into 24 pieces. Cut cellophane into 24 pieces - each one big enough to wrap the folded pieces of paper and a treat. On each piece of paper write one Christmas activity (some suggestions below). Wrap each one, with an edible treat if desired, in a piece of cellophane and tie with a piece of ribbon. Write a number from 1 to 24 on each one. Hang all onto the length of tinsel. Each day in December children open the corresponding number and enjoy the Christmas activity revealed.

**Some Fun Activities:** cooking (pudding, shortbread etc), tell Christmas jokes, sing Christmas songs, put up tree, make cards, make wrapping paper, send cards, make tree decorations, read a Christmas story, find information about other cultural celebrations, make a charitable donation, write a letter to Santa...

### Make Shortbread

#### You will need:

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup butter (room temperature)
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp vanilla
- 1 cup flour

Cream butter until light and fluffy. Mix in sugar and vanilla. Add flour. Knead for a few minutes on an unfloured surface until nice and smooth. Roll flat and cut into

Christmas shapes with cutter or knife. Place on a lightly greased baking tray. Prick each with a fork. Bake in a moderate oven for about 12 - 15 minutes until lightly browned.  
\* For orange shortbread add 1 tbsp grated orange peel to the mixture.



Try these simple ideas to make your home look festive.

**Paper Santas:** Make paper doll chains, but use a Santa figure. Fold a piece of paper several times concertina style, then draw a Santa figure on the top layer with his hands touching both sides. Cut out.

**Chains:** Cut any sort of colourful papers into strips about 10 centimetres long and 2 centimetres wide, bend each strip into a loop and link through another loop using staples or tape to bind.

**Christmas Shapes:** Draw Christmas shapes on cardboard - stars, angels, trees, bells, candles. Cut each one out, paint with glue and sprinkle with glitter.

### Make Special Gifts

Make these great gifts for special people in your life:

**Biscuits:** Make some edible treats such as the shortbread recipe on this page and put them in a jar or box or wrap in cellophane.

**Promise Voucher:** Detail a job or favour you will do for a person you care for on a piece of decorated paper.

#### Bath Salts

Makes 3 cups of bath salts.

#### You will need:

- 2 cups Epsom salts
- 1 cup sea salt or rock salt
- food colouring
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp glycerine
- essential oil such as vanilla or lavender
- glass mixing bowl
- clean, dry jars with cork or metal lids



Combine salts in bowl and mix well. Add a couple of drops of food colouring and mix well. Add glycerine and 5 drops of essential oil and mix well. Spoon salts into the jars and put lids on. Make a label and write what scent the bath salts are and suggest using about  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup in the bath.

**Special Wrapping Paper:** Make hand and foot prints on large sheets of butcher paper or newspaper; or sprinkle glitter on the paper; or paste on pictures cut from old Christmas cards or wrapping paper; or, if you're feeling artistic, draw or paint your very own Christmas designs.



# IN THE KITCHEN

**Busy? Dreading the rush that leads up to Christmas? Why not try these quick, easy and tasty nibbles if friends are visiting? They work equally well as stylish party food served with some vino or as the entrée for a special dinner.**

ITK has had the opportunity to do quite a lot of entertaining of late and, after a situation known as 'the ill-luck tarts', has come to the conclusion that DIY pastry is just too time consuming. If you have an hour to spare, by all means make your own, the results will be worth it. If, however, you have presents to wrap, tidying to do, wine to chill etc, we say go for the frozen stuff!

Accessory-wise, a nonstick 12-hole mini muffin tin will be your friend here.

## MINI FRITTATAS

If you have eggs, cream and that muffin tin, you have a licence to frittata.

1/2 cup cream

4 eggs

salt and black pepper

Mix ingredients in a bowl, then take your mini muffin tin, spray with canola oil, add precooked filling of choice, top up with egg mix, and bake at 180°C for 20 minutes. Mix will make at least 24 frittatas. Try putting in each hole:

- 2 sundried tomatoes, red capsicum, dollop of pesto, topped with fetta cheese
- cubed roast chicken, asparagus pieces, chopped thyme, squeeze of lemon
- combo of Mediterranean roast vegies (mushroom, capsicum, eggplant, zucchini) topped with shavings of Parmesan

## STAR TARTLETS

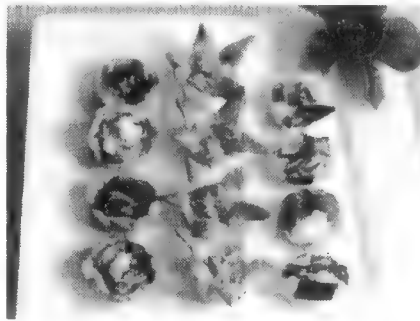
Mini tarts are always stylish. A festive way to present your tartlets is to cut out shortcrust pastry with a star cutter, then line your mini muffin tin with little star-shaped tart cases. One sheet makes about six stars. Do par-cook them for five minutes first. What to put in them?

- three cheeses (ricotta, Parmesan, fetta) combined with a dollop of grain mustard, squeeze of lemon, torn basil leaves and a dash of cayenne pepper
- roast pumpkin, sautéed leek, blue cheese, topped with a sage leaf
- grated zucchini, fresh corn ker-

nels, cheddar, sprig of marjoram

- caramelised brown onion, grated tofu, herbs and a dash of balsamic vinegar
- ricotta, spinach, pine nuts, flat leaf parsley and a few torn mint leaves

Top with frittata egg mix and bake for 20 minutes at 180°C.



## GOODIES ON CRISPS

Nibbles on crackers is always a classic, but why not try this easy alternative? Peel a large, round potato, then slice carefully into perfect rounds about 5 mm thick. Brush with oil and spread out on a nonstick tray and cook in a medium-hot oven until crisp and lightly tanned. Immediately before serving, top with:

- salsa: cubed tomato and avocado, chopped coriander and lemon juice
- mango chilli mayonnaise: 1/2 mango cubed, 1/2 tsp sweet chilli, 80 ml mayo, 1/4 tsp cumin, 1 tbsp coriander, 2 tbsp sour cream
- artichoke paste: 300 g artichoke hearts in oil, 2 tbsp lemon juice, 1 clove garlic, 1/4 cup green olives. Blend and serve topped with cherry tomato.

## SKEWERS

No, not cheese and salami on a toothpick, these actually have to be cooked. First, soak your small bamboo skewers in water so they won't become charcoal. Then, slide on three pieces of raw ingredient and cook on the grill for a few minutes, until browned each side. Try:

- green prawns marinated in chilli, lime and coriander, with mango chunks
- chicken pieces marinated in soy, sesame oil, honey and sesame seeds with a snow pea threaded between the chunks
- mushroom and eggplant pieces marinated in garlic, olive oil and balsamic vinegar (add lamb if desired)

## FLOURLESS CHOC MINI MUFFINS

200 g dark chocolate

160 g unsalted butter

5 eggs, separated

160 g almond meal

160 g caster sugar

1 tsp orange zest

1 tsp orange juice

440 g tin raspberries (or fresh)

2 tbsp cornflour

a lemon

Melt the chocolate and butter in a large bowl over simmering water. Stir in the egg yolks, almond meal, 100 g of the sugar, orange zest and juice. In another bowl, whisk egg whites with remaining sugar until peaks form. Gently fold into chocolate mixture. Spray mini muffin tin with oil, spoon mixture in and bake at 180°C for about 20 minutes. Let them cool before removing or they could crumble. Muffins will be more chewy than those made with wheat flour.

Meanwhile, mix cornflour into cold tinned raspberries then reduce in a saucepan on medium heat, stirring, until sauce thickens. Add a squeeze of lemon to taste. Top muffins with a dollop of raspberry and serve. Yum! Makes 36.

## SPARKLING GRAPEFRUIT DRINK

juice from 4 grapefruits, strained

2/3 cup sugar

1/2 cup Cinzano Bianco

2 cups soda water

Heat juice over a low heat, add sugar, stir till dissolved. Boil, reduce a little, then cool. Fill a jug with ice, pour in juice, Cinzano and top with soda water. Makes 6 glasses. Cheers! 🍷

# Pumpkin As A Green Vegetable

by Beth Montgomery, Wonthaggi, Vic.

Before I moved to the Solomon Islands I thought there were only three things you did with pumpkin – made soup, roasted it or ate it boiled. I've since learnt two yummy recipes, one of which doesn't even use the fruit part of the pumpkin.

In fact, pumpkin fruit is not as common in island markets as it is in Australia. When you say 'pumpkin', islanders automatically think of pumpkin shoots. The growing shoots of a pumpkin vine are tender and curled at the end. These shoots are delicious when boiled in coconut milk and are a common green vegetable accompaniment to baked root crops.

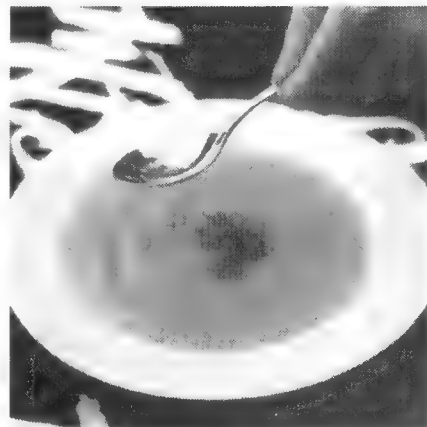
When harvesting the vine simply snap off the growing tips to about 20 centimetres in length. The next bit is time consuming and it helps if you have a sharp knife or long fingernails. The vines are covered with fine hairs that can be prickly, especially to anyone wanting to eat them. Therefore, each shoot needs to have the hairs stripped off. This is done by pulling the hairy cuticle away from the stem in strips. The small developing leaves can be kept if they are chopped finely. If the leaves are bigger than a 50-cent coin, they're probably too scratchy to eat. Once all the shoots have been stripped of their hairy coating, chop them into small pieces, about one to two centimetres long.

Now the pumpkin shoots are ready for cooking.

## PUMPKIN SHOOTS & TUNA

- 1 onion, finely diced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 bunch pumpkin shoots, stripped and chopped (makes about 1 cup, see above)
- 1 sml tin (95 g) tuna
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 tsp curry powder, optional
- 1 tsp salt, optional

Fry onion in oil in a saucepan until transparent. Add chopped pumpkin shoots and stir-fry for about one minute. Add tuna with juice from tin and stir thoroughly. Cook for a few minutes, stirring to prevent sticking. Add coconut milk and reduce heat. Add curry powder or salt to taste. Simmer for 10 minutes or until mixture is not too sloppy. Pour mixture over baked or boiled root vegetables (taro, potato, cassava, kumara).



- salt to taste
- 1 small tin (95 g) tuna

Boil kumara, onion and pumpkin in the cup of water until tender. Add remaining ingredients. Simmer on medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. ♪

## PUMPKIN, KUMARA & TUNA SOUP

- 2 white sweet potatoes (kumara), peeled and chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 1 med onion, finely chopped
- 2 – 3 cups pumpkin, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup cooked noodles
- 1 cup coconut milk

## FREEZING HINTS

Stewed fruits that you plan to freeze can be packed into freezer bags and then placed inside a clean milk carton for easy storage.

There is no need to top and tail blackcurrants if you plan to freeze them. The tops and bottoms will come off easily if they are rubbed gently between the fingers when needed. ♪

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# Lovely Lavender Gifts

by Lillian Barry, Glenorie, NSW.

Enjoy this pretty herb year-round in the garden or fill the house with its fragrant aroma.

French lavender (*Lavandula dentata*) flowers prolifically in the cooler weather, providing an abundance of perfumed mauve flowers. The more you pick the more flowers you'll have. This variety grows well in temperate climates where high rainfall and humidity could cause problems such as powdery mildew in the summer flowering variety, English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*).

French lavender flower spikes can be used in numerous ways around the home to bring a touch of cheerfulness on gloomy days. Just pick several bunches and place them in vases for the pure enjoyment of seeing and smelling them. To enjoy the flowers for longer, pick the blooms when they are at their best, tie them into several bunches with raffia and hang them upside down to dry. This looks very decorative. Lavender dries very easily and does not scatter petals and debris like some flowers do when they are drying. Once the flowers are dry they can be used in many ways. The most obvious is to crumble them into a pot-pourri to add colour and fragrance. For longer lasting fragrance add a few drops of lavender oil.

To make a fragrant wreath using the lavender bunches, purchase a light-



weight wreath base from any craft supplier and glue the bunches over the base. A glue gun is the best method for this. Keep the lavender pointing in the same direction and place the bunches close together so that the finished wreath shows no gaps. Tie a mauve ribbon through the top of the wreath and hang in a prominent place so that the perfume of the lavender is at nose level. To enhance the perfume add a few drops of lavender oil from time to time. This wreath makes a lovely gift and looks exquisite when made on a heart-shaped base.

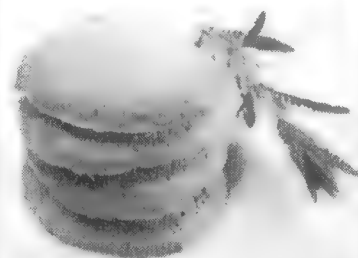
For those who prefer to eat their lavender rather than just sniff it, there are numerous recipes that can be adapted to include lavender. Though English lavender is more often used in cooking, I have used French lavender to equal effect. Always ensure the lavender spikes are free of insects by shaking them upside down vigorously before use. Make sure no pesticides have been sprayed on or near any lavender (or other herb for that matter) intended for culinary use.

Make lavender shortbread using a basic shortbread recipe and adding a tablespoon of dried, or two of fresh, lavender flowers to the basic mixture prior to baking. Lavender can be used as a substitute for rosemary in most recipes, or you can use half and half lavender and rosemary. Lavender com-

plements citrus fruits and can be used to add colour as well. To make a delicious and colourful dessert, poach orange segments in a simple syrup with lavender flowers added.

Lavender can also be used as a condiment or spice. Make lavender sugar by adding dried, crumbled lavender flowers to caster sugar and storing in a jar for future use. This can be sprinkled over pies and cakes, or used in sorbets and fruit desserts to add just a hint of flavour. Lavender can be added to mustard recipes and dried herb mixes.

Once you start experimenting with lavender uses in and around your home, you'll be amazed at its versatility. ♣



## LAVENDER BICKIES

150 g butter  
115 g raw sugar  
1 egg, beaten  
1 tbsp dried lavender flowers  
170 g SR flour  
water

Cream butter and sugar then stir in egg. Mix in lavender flowers and flour. Add a dash of water to make a smooth consistency. Preheat oven to 180° C. Grease two baking trays and drop teaspoonful size dobs of mixture onto them. Top with a sprinkle of raw sugar. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes until golden. Makes about 25 biscuits. ♣

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# Learning And Community

## Manning River Steiner School

by Joanne Strauss, Taree, NSW.



For those of you with children who are tearing your hair out over the poor choice of schools in your area, I'd like to tell you about the Manning River Steiner School. It's in a wonderful place called the Manning Valley, which is three to three-and-a-half hours drive north of Sydney. Before I tell you about the school, though, I'll just give you some idea of the landscape and community here.

Taree, the largest town, is right on the Manning River. Rents and land here are still cheap relative to Sydney, Newcastle and the Central Coast. We have a pretty dynamic community, and it's only 15 minutes from the beach! For those who prefer the bush, there are many magnificent areas to choose from within 20 – 30 minutes drive of Taree. Forster is only half an hour

away, Port Macquarie an hour, and Newcastle two hours down the road.

An ex-Sydneyite, I moved here in 1986, having spent 18 months in both Port Macquarie and Kempsey. Both of those valleys had their places of great beauty, but I was often drawn to Taree for social and cultural events. I was knocked out by the number of community arts groups working away to generate exciting cultural happenings: Armchair Theatre, Taree Pro-Musica, Taree Arts Council, Manning Valley Community Radio Station 2BOB-FM; and then later, the Manning Regional Art Gallery, the Taree City Festival Committee (biennial event), countless craft groups and events, and some really great people working through Taree Adult Education and TAFE.

I was most impressed by the fact that

Staff, parents, elders and children celebrating the 10th birthday of the Manning River Centre for Rudolf Steiner Education, in March 2003. Photo by Scott Calvin courtesy of *Manning River Times*.

the local community worked for 12 years leading up to 1988, raising funds for a venue that could host international-standard artists and musicians. The money raised was matched by a Bicentennial Grant to build the Manning Entertainment Centre, which is always hosting some company of singers, dancers, actors, a touring orchestra, or local eisteddfod or arts production, of which there are many.

In the late 1980s, Bill Mollison was invited to come and teach a permaculture course, a legacy of which was the Manning Bioregional Association.



People from this group and the Manning Owner Builders Group became founding parents of the Manning River Steiner School, along with some 'elders' who knew more about anthroposophy (wisdom of the human being), and about the nitty-gritty groundwork that was necessary to establish firm foundations for what became the Manning River Centre for Rudolf Steiner Education.

At the beginning of 2002 the centre/school moved into premises in downtown Taree. At last count there were 60 students in our school, which goes from kindergarten (two days a week for four year olds, five days for five to six year olds) to class six. So,

class sizes are still small.

There is a playgroup for younger children; and for adults, a craft group and several study groups. We also run various public workshops and events each year for adults, for example in biodynamic farming and various aspects of Steiner education. Our teachers are very dedicated and there is a high level of parent involvement, which is essential for economic reasons, but also means parents know exactly what goes on in the classroom.

We are only human beings, our school's not perfect, and neither is Taree; it has the same sorts of problems as any medium-sized Australian country town. But there are many fantastic

and interesting people settled here and more seem to be coming all the time, many because of our school. We would like to see more happen here. We are only limited by our numbers, so why not join us in this great adventure?

To contact the Manning River Centre for Rudolf Steiner Education, you can phone the administrator, Mark Driscoll, on 02-6551-3403. Postal address: 80 Wynter Street, Taree, NSW 2430. Email: manning-steiner@bigpond.com

If you would like to know more about Rudolf Steiner Education generally, you can have a look at the Rudolf Steiner Schools Association (RSSA) website: steineroz.com



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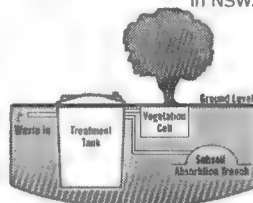
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# Making Friends In The Bush

by Jan Farrar, Kilkivan, Qld.

Congratulations! You have bought yourself into the Dream by purchasing a few country acres, and moved in. The cartons have been unpacked and the place is starting to feel like home. You will probably be so stunned at having finally made your Dream a reality, you'll walk around your property 10 times a day, marvelling at the things you now own, from the ancient fence posts down to the rusty plough disc left forgotten in the shed. It takes some time to fully come to grips with the idea that after reading *Grass Roots* for years and yearning after a self-sufficient lifestyle, you are *here*!

I have not read anywhere (and no doubt some GR reader will correct me if I am wrong) about the intricacies of social relationships; getting to know people and making new friends at your country address. So here is a general checklist of the people you might want to know and others to avoid. As I touch (ever so lightly) on this delicate subject, keep in mind there are always exceptions to rules and I am still learning, so am no expert! I merely offer my observations in a light-hearted manner!

After the settling-in period you will probably start to look beyond your paddock fence and perhaps become involved with the people in your community. Or, on the other hand, you might not. Those of us who have lived in a small country town for some time are fully aware that there *are* people who prefer to buy their few acres and hide themselves away. These people probably put peace and quiet at a premium, and are not good subjects for friendly overtures.

Please also be aware that a few 'incomers' take the opportunity provided by country quiet and an acreage to plant a certain illegal crop. If neighbours don't want you chasing that errant cow, sheep or goat over their back blocks and say they will get the animal for you, it might be best to abide by their wishes. Whether or not you condone such illegal substances is up to you and you can



always call the police hotline to report any suspicions, but be conscious that commercial growers may protect their hidden crops with violence if they think you're a threat.

In contrast, there are the regular country people. They range from what I call the local 'squattocracy' down to the 'blockies'. This is a term used hereabouts for GR-type people who have purchased a few acres in the country. I'm considered a 'blockie' myself, but have a friend with 20 acres who is also thought of as a 'blockie', so the term appears to be fluid!

Add several zeros to make 2000 acres and my friend would still not make the grade with the 'squattocrats'. They have the full weight of history behind them. Their ancestors built this town – there are streets and bridges named after them to prove it! They are very nice and well-mannered, go to church every Sunday, and are extremely polite at social functions. Do not expect any invitations to a morning tea, unless

your three times great grandfather did something noteworthy like driving 5000 head of cattle all the way from Sydney/Brisbane/Melbourne/Perth to establish a 'run', or (much easier one would think) found gold.

The 'old-timers' are easier to get to know. They've been here for maybe 40 years or more and might be landholders or not. I've made some good friends amongst this older set who still have some history. I am fascinated by their stories of how things once were here in Kilkivan. Is this relevant? It sure is! Show a genuine appreciation for, and an interest in, your locale's history and you will make, if not lifelong buddies, at least valuable contacts.

You will make the best social connections with other 'blockies' or 'incomers', especially when it comes to having a few friends around for a barbecue. The camaraderie is great, and you are all in the same boat together. For the most part, however, they don't know much – just as you don't – but sharing information is helpful.

This thumbnail sketch is of course an attempt from my own viewpoint to do the impossible; categorise people! Here are a few more things I have learnt about how not to make enemies and to maintain friendly relationships all round.

## LEAVE THE PAST BEHIND

Don't go on about what you once did



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or were in your city life. Country folk are curious but they don't like being bored silly with your sales figures or promotions. They would rather hear about what you plan to do right here and now.

### LOCK UP YOUR PETS

If you arrive with a dog or adopt one, please make sure it won't harass your neighbour's livestock. This ranks as a number one sin with every landholder I've spoken to. It's bad enough they have to deal with dingos and feral dogs, they categorically *do not* want to have to shoot anyone's pet pooch who is running amok in their prized sheep or beef herd. They are within their rights to shoot and kill anything attacking their stock. Failure to recognise this, and to take responsibility for family pets, has caused more than a few bad relations in this country town!

### KEEP YOUR FENCES IN ORDER

A neighbour might kindly round up your straying livestock once or twice, but he's going to get irritable unless you solve the problem and stop your horse from getting into his orchard, or your chooks raiding his vegetable garden.

### DON'T IMPOSE TOO MUCH

Most country people are kind-hearted and really like to help others. However, if your generator fails once or twice and you call on Joe Blow next door to help fix it and *don't* listen to his advice, he's going to think you a total idiot the next time you call. Listen to what he says and get it right next time round so you don't have to knock on his door a third time with the same problem.

### OFFER YOUR HELP

Even if you don't know much, this goes a long way with country folk. Something like, 'I've not built a yard before, but I'd like to learn', or 'I don't know anything about cows, but if you need a hand with mustering, give me a call'. People will remember your willingness to pitch in.

If they offer to help with a job you find overwhelming, such as fencing or rebuilding that fallen down chook shed, grab the offer! Their expertise is invaluable. Work with them so you can learn. Many will flatly refuse any payment, especially cash. They may even seem offended or embarrassed if you persist. This is probably because times are always 'tough' in the country and if they want your help at any time, they probably can't afford to pay you! Around here, a carton of beer is an acceptable payment, as is a barbecue invitation or a roast dinner! Bartering goods or your expertise is also a viable option. I have repaid others for work on my car or house by cooking a meal, doing housework, giving massages or making a leadlight gift.

Do try to keep the exchange rate even at all times otherwise you or they may start feeling resentful, put-upon or even ripped-off. This does not engender friendly relationships.

### GET INVOLVED

Any small community offers a great range of activities, particularly if you have kids. One word of warning - please don't take on too much! I fell into that trap and at one time found myself on five committees! As new blood you will be much prized. Older members get burn-out from doing too much so *you* are exactly what they need! Please resist the urge to be Superman or woman if you wish to maintain your peace and sanity.

### BE YOURSELF!

Country folk can sniff out falsehoods and pretensions at 50 paces. They are pretty straight people who hold to old-fashioned values, and their lives on the land are not easy and are getting harder day by day thanks to drought conditions and various governmental policies. Just be you - sincere, straight to the point and honest. That is the best way to gain respect and friendship anywhere.

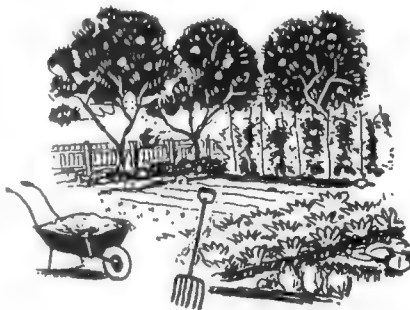
### BE THERE

If a tragedy happens, don't turn your back, pretend it's not your problem, or think that you can't help. Tragic circumstances are a part of our lives here in the country, often more so than in comfortable suburbia.

Farm accidents, machinery maimings, injuries caused by livestock and road accidents can and do happen with alarming regularity. Depression brought about by the drought and financial burdens contributes to a spiralling suicide rate in the bush. When you live in a small community where you get to know just about everybody after a few years, you cannot escape the effects of such tragedies when they happen. A simple phone call, an offer of support, some flowers, your presence at a funeral: these make you a part of the community and a person who demonstrates they value the old-fashioned ethic of 'mateship' that still survives in the country. Your support will be noted and long remembered.

Being in the country means living your life more fully, right down to the bone where it can really hurt. The distance between you and other human beings is far less. You can choose to become a recluse, or you can get out there and really live life, warts and all.

Don't get me wrong! It's not all dark and grim out here, far from it. Since coming to the country I have laughed more, cried more, and experienced more of life in general than I ever would have done in a city where values and culture create a buffer that distances you from real life. You need that in the city to stay sane. To stay sane in the bush you must gently reverse all your 'don't get close to me' city habits and learn to really look at and treasure the people around you. Only then will you begin to understand the true meaning of friendship. ♡



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### AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS & MONEY MAKING OPPORTUNITIES

# KEEPING YOUR COOL

## Reverse Cycle Air Conditioners

by Alexander Cranford, Hay, NSW.

Many people believe that air conditioners use a great deal of electricity, however, it depends on what type you have and how it is used. True, the old single-system models with crude thermostats and piston type compressors do cost a lot to run. By contrast, the modern split-system type, fitted with rotary compressors and precise thermostats, need not cost a great deal to run if used sensibly.

Consider that, in cooling mode, for every 1° C reduction in temperature an air conditioner is set at, there is an increase of consumption of one kilowatt per hour. If an air conditioner is set at 20° C rather than 25° C over a five-hour period, you will have used an extra 25 kilowatts in one day just to make you shiver. Is 25° C not cool enough? I am happy to operate mine at 28° C in soft cooling mode – this is where the fan comes on intermittently at low speed, but removes the moisture from the air. Also, think about wearing less clothes.

All external windows and doors should be kept closed. Although a 2.5 horsepower air conditioner might have the capacity to cool a unit, or even a small house, the doors to any rooms that are not being used should be kept closed. So why not be sensible with the use of air conditioners? On the more

marginal days why not be satisfied with a ceiling fan?

The other important point is to keep the north- and west-facing windows covered. It's best to have external coverings, but any type is better than none at all. Contrary to what many people might tell you, ceiling insulation does not stop the hot summer sun coming through north- and west-facing windows.

For heating in reverse cycle, if you set the air conditioner at 30° C, you will see your electricity bill rise substantially. I set mine at 22° C and wear a jumper. In winter you want the sun to come through the north- and west-facing windows, but keep all the curtains closed at night. Draughts need to be excluded. The air conditioner in my bedroom does start to struggle when the outside temperature goes below freezing. Some of the modern ones are claimed to be good to -10° C outside. This only happens here on a few nights a year, which would also be the case for a good deal of Australia. On such nights it's better to use an electric convection heater.

LPG costs so much it's entirely uneconomic to use it for heating. Comparisons to natural gas are difficult because the cost of electricity varies around Australia. Also, the running costs of an air conditioner vary



Windows and french doors should be covered with blinds or shutters to stop hot sun entering.

according to the amount of heat outside. If the house is cold but the sun is shining outside on a winter's morning, reverse cycle air conditioning will work extremely efficiently.

Instead of going to the time and expense of casting a concrete base for the outside unit, consider buying a couple of 40-centimetre precast concrete sole plates (used for restumping houses). It is preferable to locate the outside unit on the south or east side of the house. If that is not possible, consider the creative use of shade cloth in accordance with the installation instructions. ☺



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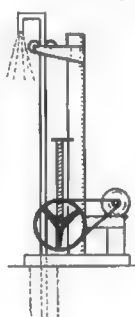
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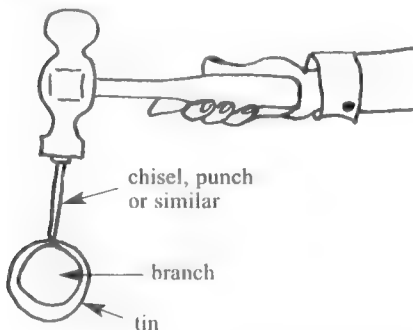
# RECYCLING RUNS RIOT

## Tin Can Candle Holders

by Roberino, Arrawarra Beach, NSW.

Eating and socialising outdoors can be a misery if those pesky mosquitoes, midges and sandflies start biting and flies are continually buzzing around. Citronella candles and personal insect repellents all help. It's easy to make individually designed candle holders to protect the candles from being blown out by wind gusts. These can be made from recycled jam tins, baked bean tins and similar by handypersons with some basic tools.

Besides some metalwork tools, you'll need a stout hardwood branch a little smaller in diameter than the tins you plan to work with. Arrange this branch securely in a vice or other manner – maybe in the fork of a tree – preferably horizontally, but you might find with some designs that vertical is better.



A battery-powered electric drill is a big help. There's no need for the \$200 ones, just a cheapy with flat batteries purchased at a garage sale for maybe \$5 can be hooked up to your car's battery. Remove the heavy flat batteries and the diode, if there is one, and run new insulated wires (two-core flex or figure of eight) to the trigger switch; about two metres should do, with two alligator clips on the ends to clip onto your battery posts/terminals. Any handyperson, electrician or mechanic can do this for you for a nominal amount of spondulix. Good quality drill bits are as dear as

poison, so get someone to teach you how to sharpen drills properly. Apprentice fitters and turners seem to do nothing else so I'm told. Small diameter drills are the easiest to break, so I always take them out of the drill chuck as soon as I finish using them because the smallest bump can lead to damage.

The designs of these candle lamps are so numerous I won't talk about them. Just make a sketch of what you think you like the look of, maybe borrow a few ideas from other objects such as antiques or Art Nouveau furni-

ture. I've seen candle lamps in gift shops for \$40. You might be able to start a cottage industry for your family to sell at the local markets, maybe not at \$40 a piece though.

There are many other tin containers of various shapes and sizes that can be recycled into suitably trendy items. Look in libraries for books on Depression furniture for clues. I find all this far from depressing because so much wastefulness can be redirected into positive and unique works of art and usefulness. ♻️



Holes punched with a 70-millimetre-long thin masonry nail can form intricate patterns easily.

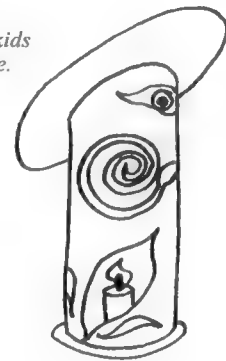


Deodorant spray can. Before work begins you must let out *all* of the pressure. Remove *all* plastics.

*Wear gloves!  
Tin is very sharp so kids  
should be at a distance.*



Vegetable cooking oil tins are free from fish and chip shops and can be easily soldered, riveted or joined with wire. Don't use solder on a candle holder as the heat, over time, could melt the solder.



*It's alive!  
Always keep candles away from flammables.  
Every year hundreds of people are killed by  
candles, worldwide. Take care.*

# Animal Care In A Bushfire

by Louisa Vale, Mt Buffalo, Vic.

Coping with bushfires is an inevitable consequence of living in Australia, and, with global warming, catastrophes such as the January 2003 bushfires could become something that more readers will face in the short-term future. Unfortunately, it's all too easy to be complacent and forget the lessons to be learnt from an experience such as this, but believe me, once you've been through it, you'll never be caught on the hop again!

Living in the foothills of Mount Buffalo National Park, my partner and I and our dog, vegies and chooks all had to cope with the extremes of environment associated with fire in the summer of 2003. Some of the animal management ideas we utilised, however, can be applied to a number of emergency situations.

## PREPARE EARLY

Sounds obvious, doesn't it? As well as thinking about your house, garden and surrounds at the beginning of summer, give some thought to your livestock. Does your chook pen, horse paddock, dog run or other animal enclosure have appropriate shade? What water supplies do these facilities have? Can you reach and service these with fire-fighting equipment – will the hose reach? Don't forget to do a big clean-up on these areas as well as your house surrounds; remove rubbish, fire fuel and long grass here as well.

Consider access to animal holding areas. If you had to take shelter in your house, could you let animals into safe areas or paddocks easily? Is there vehicle access?

Unfortunately, many residents in the alpine areas lost livestock and even dogs and chooks, because the animals couldn't get out of the line of the fire. It's not always possible to keep all your animals safe at a time when you have to look after your own safety, but considering some of the points I've mentioned ahead of time gives you a few choices. Keeping grass down in



View from the vegie patch, the fire roaring furiously up the hill.

animal areas, or even being able to protect animal buildings in a similar way to your own house, might give them a better chance.

## HIGH-RISK DAYS

The fires here burnt for several weeks of very high risk, which is not something my partner and I had really considered. We thought the fire would be more of the 'wham-bam' type than a long and draining process! By doing a few key things, such as keeping ourselves informed of local conditions through radio and community fire-guard, we knew when things were becoming more dangerous. We made sure that our dog was kept inside with water, that our chooks had the maximum water and shade we could supply under the circumstances, and that they were left locked up in case we needed to 'pack' them. Needless to say, they all stopped laying in protest! A similar approach applies with larger animals. Are they in paddocks with access, water and somewhere to move to if the

front approaches? Have you thought about how to 'pack' your animals? Can you leave dogs, cats, chooks etc elsewhere if you have to evacuate? Do your dogs have identification in case they're lost in the confusion or panic?

When thinking about our chooks, we had prepared 'travel cages' – some kindly borrowed from a local boarding kennel – ready to pack on very high-risk days. We also had friends willing to mind our dog if we needed to evacuate for some period of time.

On high-risk days, smoke dramatically reduced visibility. Temperatures were extreme, as were the hot winds associated with being so close to a big fire. It was important to plan and manage the animals with these extreme conditions in mind. Like ourselves, the dog was very distressed by the circumstances, including having sore eyes and throat. Our poultry also suffered physically, shown by panting, fluffed up feathers and dramatic moults. Some first-aid knowledge definitely came in handy!

## FIRST AID

Along with other items prepared before the fire season, we readied a first-aid kit for the animals as well as ourselves. Do you have appropriate ointment for burns? Do you have bandages suitable for your larger animals? Dogs and other large animals in particular can be burnt by embers, burning stumps and other smouldering debris. I had prepared pawpaw ointment for this, but you might have other medications you prefer to use. I also had Rescue Remedy, towels, water with honey as a dehydration remedy, and weak saline solution to flush eyes. Having containers or an alternative place to take your animals is important for first-aid reasons as well as safety. If you are under the pressure of fire, a trip to a vet might have to be postponed.

Another first-aid policy that was really valuable in our area after the fire passed was the wonderful work of the wildlife rescue service. These people made themselves available to pick up and treat injured wildlife. Add your local wildlife rescue phone number to your emergency list.

We found that in the days immediately after the fire 'blew up' a huge range of birds, wallabies, possums and wombats were displaced and passing through our garden and land. At the time we joked that it was like living in an 'animal commission flat' where everyone had moved in at once. The buckets of water we provided on boundary fences and extra shallow dishes of water for smaller animals were used by a range of creatures. All the displaced animals and birds were confused, hungry and very thirsty.



The remarkable Bickie was moved with her eggs several times and still hatched healthy 'fire chicks'.

Many people surrounding us put out extra hay and even fruit and vegies to temporarily keep the visitors going for a few days. I know that some of you would disagree with feeding native animals and birds (usually I'd agree!), but the conditions were extraordinary.

### Handy First-Aid Items

- Lucas Pawpaw Ointment
- Rescue Remedy
- Saline solution
- Light bandaging material for paws
- Eye dropper

### HEAT DISTRESSED CHOOKS

One of the saddest moments for me during the fires came with the loss of my beloved Croad Langshan rooster, Sid. Although I knew he was older than my hens, I had no idea until talking to my mum after the event that he was nearly 10, a ripe old age for any chook. As I've mentioned, temperatures and conditions during the two weeks the fires surrounded us were extreme and, despite all my management, Sid became very distressed in the heat.

Heat stress manifests itself in darkened comb and wattles, panting, staggering and splayed out wings. Remove your chooks immediately from the outside weather. Gently bathe them in cool water, particularly wetting legs, underwings and face with a rag or old facewasher (this proved to be easy because the bathtub was full of fire-fighting water!). Place the birds in an open box near a fan with wet towels over the top to keep it dark and cool. Don't forget to dose the birds with

## HELPFUL READING

*Backyard Poultry Naturally*, Alanna Moore.

*Dr Pitcairn's Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs and Cats*, Richard Pitcairn (hard to find but worth the look).

Rescue Remedy every 15 minutes for the first hour or so. Birds will generally respond to being cooled, the dark place is calming, and Rescue always works wonders! As your birds begin to respond, some water with honey can be given with an eye dropper or in a bowl.

### A HAPPY ENDING

Fortunately for us, the loss of our old rooster was the biggest loss we suffered. Other people in our area *did* have to treat larger animals – dogs, cats and even native wildlife – for burns and distress. Our happy postscript to the tale of 'our bushfire' was a broody (and therefore obsessive) hen. Discovered on the day we were forced to evacuate, this little hen and her setting of eggs were bundled off to a friend's house. Due to the never-ending battle of the fires, she was evacuated from one house to another three times before returning home, and still stayed on her eggs! Stubborn is the only word to use! Bickie and her 'fire chickens' (as they are now fondly known) are doing well.

The moral of our story is to think ahead and prepare for the fire season. Although we are all aware of the risk of fire on hot days with northerly winds, you have to get ready at the start of the season. If you and your family have thought things through, put your fire plan in place and prepared your property, you're well on the way. Think about your animals, prepare first-aid and contingency plans, and make sure you're aware of high-risk days. Look after yourself and the creatures around you, and, most importantly of all, *don't panic!* Good luck next summer.

See GR 130 for an article from fire safety officer Graham Hind on caring for and transporting animals in a bushfire. Other bushfire advice can be found in GRs 148, 143, 136, 124, 111 and 106. ♫

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# An Owner Builder Experience

## Building And Costing

by Dick Allen, D'Aguilar, Qld.

Last issue I explained what processes we went through before we began to build our new home, including doing an owner builder course and organising the correct documentation. We then selected a suitable kit home supplier who could give us a welded steel frame to beat the ever-present termites in our area, and were ready to start building.

### ORDER OF OPERATIONS

We erected a shed and connected water, power and telephone; fenced the block and installed a gate; and obtained an air compressor, which was a great help (to an arthritic pensioner) in tightening all the high tensile tek screws.

We set out the footings with the help of a subbie, who excavated the trenches and drilled the footing holes with a backhoe. The metal reinforcing was placed and ready-mix concrete

ordered. As the pier holes were filled the steel piers were set in place.

### Framing

We ordered the steel for the floor framing and the supplier advised that delivery must be by a fixed-chassis truck. Inevitably, it arrived on a trailer and had to be dumped by the roadside (or brought back next week). I had to haul all this steel uphill to the building site on a 1.8 x 1.2-metre trailer and old grey Fergie TE20. Finding enough time was always a difficulty.

When we had completed installing the floor frame on the footings the supplier delivered the frames. In exchange for a barbie lunch they raised the frames and roof trusses. They fitted enough screws to keep them in place so that we could fit and tighten the framing bolts and place the thousands of tek screws.

### Roofing

The roof sheeting and insulation rolls

were delivered and we commenced laying the roof. Wind was a constant hindrance when laying both the roof sheeting and the insulation. A greater problem was rain or dew, no matter how light. One minute we stood confidently screwing down sheets, the next we were sliding off the roof – dew had arrived or a light shower of rain. Usually the last row of screw heads on our verandah sheets just managed to stop us from going over the edge.

### Bricks

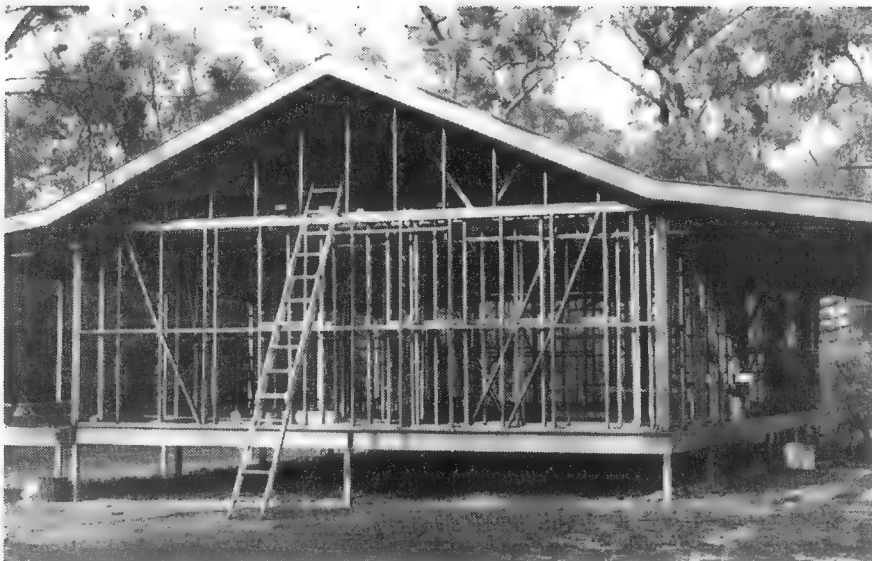
With the roof in place it was now time to select the brickie. We had chosen a dark brick at the brickworks and these were duly delivered to the site (thankfully, on a fixed-chassis truck).

The wall insulation was fixed in place, lintels and brick ties ordered, quotes obtained, brickie<sup>2</sup> selected, window and door frames ordered. The brickie's team of four soon had the out-



In my experience, you can't expect to match professional builders' costs when owner building; their buying power is superior and they have a wider product network. Costs aside, it's satisfying to be able to say 'we did it!'.





Wind, rain and dew all made roofing a more hazardous job, but perseverance paid off and we got it completed.

side in place and it was a very good job.

#### **Front Wall**

The wall along the front of the house consists in the main of doors and windows. The remainder was of Hardiplank cement sheet. This wall is suspended from the floor up to enable clear access to the underfloor area. This method facilitated installation of drainage and pipework and enables easy inspection of the underfloor area for termite activity. The natural light under the floor also helps to deter termites.

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#### **Flooring**

The hardwood (spotted gum) flooring arrived in two packs and when these were opened we could not believe our eyes: the packs consisted of random lengths varying from 5.5 metres to 75 millimetres.

When we'd done the floor in our first owner builder house we'd ordered the number of lengths of flooring required and there were no joins. I rang suppliers in both Queensland and NSW to try and get a better deal, but was told that we could 'take it or leave it'. Now, four years later, it is possible to get full-length packs. This was a big disappointment and ended hopes of polished floors in our price range. There were 7000 special screws to fix the flooring to the steel joists and these take some care to drive in.

#### **More Framing**

After the flooring was completed we then installed the inner wall frames and ceiling battens.

#### **Electrical**

We obtained three quotations for the electrical work and accepted the lowest, which was from a local contractor. He roughed in the lines ready for the linings. The main power supply trench was dug from the fuse box on the shed to the house entry point and power, water and telephone lines installed.

#### **Plumbing**

We then organised quotations from four plumbers/drainers, ensuring that each

provided a fully detailed list of all work, materials and fittings to be used so that there would be no extras at the end of the job, or afterwards. Even after all that the council inspector required the toilet cistern overflows to be led to the outside so that leakage could easily be observed. (We have a septic system and internal overflow is not allowed.)

The plumber certainly earned his money working in the confined spaces under the floor, hanging drain and water supply lines from the floor joists for the full length of the house. With those lines clear of the ground we are able to inspect for leaks and rectification is easier.

The septic trenches were completed just as the rain started and it was lucky the backhoe was 4WD otherwise it would have bogged.

During this work we completed the lining, tiling and installations of fittings, basins, shower recesses, bath and toilets in conjunction with the plumber.

#### **Plastering**

The next job was inner lining and the gyprock arrived as a mountain of 5.5-metre sheets on the living room floor. Plastering is a job best left to the experts, but we had to cut costs wherever possible so we had to do the job ourselves, with help from any other relations or friends who were unfortunate enough to visit us. We (wife and I) were able to complete all the hall linings first, but we needed a team of four or five to raise the long sheets to the ceiling. Our friends did great work and we fitted all the ceiling sheets without mishap. The fitting of cornices was easy and effective.

#### **Electrical Again**

We tried to complete internal painting before the sparky came to finish, but he was in a hurry and insisted on completing the job.

We had opted for single fluorescents in all positions so that we could hold just one spare tube for all 22 lights. (The tubes are already five years old and we still haven't used the spare.) We had at least two double power points in each room, with five in the kitchen, plus one special for the fridge wired separately.

Fan and vents were fitted to toilets, kitchen and bathroom and overhead

fans to bedrooms and living room. The lights to the bedrooms were hidden behind the curtain pelmets.

There are two smoke alarms outside the bedrooms and these often advise that someone has burnt the toast.

### Subbies

We were very happy with our subbies, who did work of a high standard, cooperated at all times and had each quoted against at least two other contractors. Their prices came in under keen estimates and all materials were of satisfactory standard and have given continual service for five years so far.

### Odds and Ends

We installed a 22,500-litre water tank and led the stormwater to it and connected an auto pump to the sink with a double filter in the line solely for drinking water.

The house is 'mostly' complete, with the floor finish outstanding. I'm asthmatic and Joy suffers from sinus, so carpets are not an option. The original idea of Estapol has lost its appeal since there are so many joins in the floorboards. After indulging in a trip around Australia last year we are not in a hurry to spend any money.

An electric hot water service is connected to the house as well as a solar hot water service on the roof of the shed. The solar system is not connected to power so that any hot water used from it has been heated only by the sun.

The house is 15.8 metres long by 8 metres wide with a 2.4-metre verandah front and rear. The whole roof is insulated, including the verandahs. The front verandah has a timber deck and the rear has a concrete deck.

### COSTS

In my experience the owner builder cannot expect to complete a house at anywhere near the cost a builder can obtain with bulk buying over multiple projects, and I don't think the ability to dictate subbie's prices can be matched by the owner builder. The usual cost of a brick veneer house would be about \$350 per square metre. Our costs totalled \$450 per square metre and excluded our labour, which was free.

Our costs are listed below. The house was a kit house and included all cladding, gyprock, insulation, doors and door furniture, windows and flyscreens,



Our owner-built home, just as we'd dreamed. A few more jobs will see it finished.

ceilings, gutters, fascias, fixings and fasteners. Prime cost items are included in the costs shown, including taps, vanities, bath, kitchen sink and all fittings.

All material prices, ready-mix concrete, tiles, fittings etc were at discounted prices of at least 5 percent and up to 10 percent, with some fittings to 25 percent. Most discounts were small, but probably the best we could negotiate.

Owner builder course – \$220  
 OBSA application – \$200  
 Soil survey and design – \$450  
 Council fees – \$1120  
 Insurances – \$625  
 Back hoe – \$550  
 Footing reo – \$870  
 Footing concrete – \$1725  
 Steel frame, bricks, roof and other materials included in kit – \$33,325  
 Front verandah – \$5500  
 Rear verandah – \$4150  
 Steel floor frame and decking – \$12,000 (includes piers)  
 Bedding sand – \$880  
 Concreter – \$2000  
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Stormwater – \$450

Total – \$88,945

We have yet to finish the hardwood floors and are installing a wood-burning stove; both of these are additional to the above total.

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# AUSSIE-STYLE CHRISTMAS WREATH

by Jose Robinson, Noosaville, Qld.

Some years back a friend gave me some grapevine prunings; each was between one and two metres long. The shorter lengths I planted in my garden and have enjoyed many bunches of sweet green grapes from them. The long pieces of vine I made into 12 twined circles to use as a base for some Christmas wreaths approximately 400 millimetres in diameter. When still green the vines are easy to weave in and out and, with ends tucked in, don't need any fastening to stay put.

Next I collected various sizes of gumnuts and other seed pods from native trees. Some of these I sprayed with gold, silver, red and dark green paints. I did not cover them completely with paint, but left natural patches. When the paint dried I tied and stitched them onto the wreaths. The large gumnuts are very tough and require a hole drilled through the top. I used a bench



vice to hold the nut while I drilled a hole in each with an electric drill.

Dried wood roses left in their natural golden-brown colour were an attractive addition to the wreath.

Instead of using ribbon for the final long bow to hang down in front, I cut a half-metre of gold opaque nylon fabric into strips. The scissors cuts sealed the edges so no fraying would occur. I tied large bows with long tails at the base of each wreath. Later I added some sateen green and red ribbons for a Christmassy effect.

Some of my finished wreaths I sold at markets and some I gave to friends. I kept one myself and have adorned my front door with it during the festive season for many years.

Unlike store-purchased wreaths, mine always looks fresh and has not become tatty and faded. Over the years I have had many flattering remarks made about my homemade Aussie-style Christmas wreath. 🍷

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# TROPICAL COVER CROPS

## Perennials

by Jane 'Many Leaves' Lawrance, Babinda, Qld.

All my plants must be multifunctional, performing at least two jobs: protect the soil, and provide us or our animals with food. My ongoing aim is to have dense, edible, vegetative growth everywhere, instead of useless, competitive, nutrient-sapping weeds and tall grasses. Trying to protect and insulate the soil and decrease nutrient run-off are challenges to tropical gardeners. Throughout the seasons I've diligently observed the plant species that have survived successfully in all weathers, providing nutrient-rich greens for the table. A few have grown happily in large groups, hunching up to form a protective cover over the soil. It's these little perennial workers I want to tell you about. They don't all fix nitrogen, but they do excel in soil protection, smother weeds and are great to eat.

### PINTO PEANUT

I briefly mentioned pinto peanut (*Arachis pintoii*) in my last article (GR 158). In between rain showers, I successfully planted out runners all over the orchard terraces and sloping banks with the correct inoculant (group P, strain NC92) to activate nitrogen fixation. Now, 1½ years later, there's a lush carpet of green pinto protecting the soil from erosion and evaporation, cushioning the earth with its dense mat of running stems and broad flat leaves. Its insulating property minimises temperature extremes in the soil underneath the fruit trees.

I found it was best to pull out the larger weeds to help the pinto become established because it can't compete, but once this is done you're laughing. I've discovered you can purchase pinto peanut seeds, but at a price, so the runners are preferable. Due to its extensive running capacity, I've kept it out of the vegie gardens. You really have to seriously consider where to plant pinto peanut or you'll never get rid of it. Poultry love it, once it has

become established of course. The attractive, small, yellow pea flowers on long delicate stems attract beneficial insects. The developing seed then buries down about eight centimetres into the soil, where you can later dig up small edible peanuts, but you've got to be keen! Eat the small tender leaves and flowers instead.

### MUSHROOM PLANT

With glossy, deep green leaves, and stems tasting of mushroom, the shade-loving mushroom plant (*Rungia klossii*) thrives in our humid summers. Over winter, growth is slower, but it's always there as a staple green. Best eaten raw, it's high in calcium with a little protein.

I pick mine regularly to maintain a bushy, productive plant that spreads over the soil, in amongst the shade of assorted greens cascading down the vegie slopes. If you leave a patch untouched, the small, delicate blue flowers can blossom freely. I've seen



Jane with a lush patch of mushroom plant.

them only once, as I keep my plants well nibbled! With 10-centimetre cuttings in well-drained soil, you'll soon have plenty of them. A striking variegated yellow and green species is also available, but prefers a sunnier position.

### LEBANESE CRESS

Lebanese stone cress (*Aethionema cordifolium*) is a decorative, ferny leafed brassica. I reckon it tastes somewhere between watercress, celery and parsley. Spreading by sturdy, succulent runners, it can move quite rapidly, so, again, consider where to plant it. I've dotted mine up the sloping banks where it's really happy in the shade, crawling under the mass of other edibles. Just part some leaves and you'll find it creeping underneath securing the soil with its root system. A freshly picked bunch of leaves adds so much to a salad. During our summers, it does die down, but I'm hoping, with the new banks and dense ground covers, it will survive until next winter, when it really takes off again.

### FAN-LEAFED PIT PIT

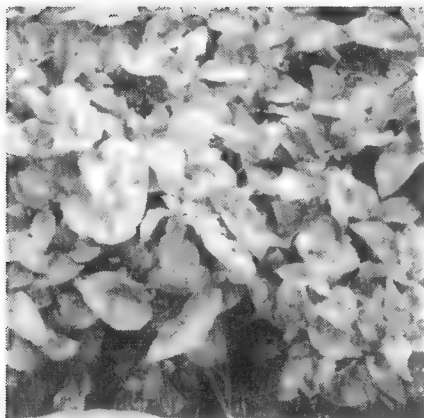
I must mention one plant that is excellent as a tasty food and a cover crop. Back in GR 154, I wrote about the fan-leaved pit pit (*Setaria palmifolia*), also known as palm grass or highland pit pit. I described how I planted out an area of pit pit as a future ground cover. Well, time has shown how successful it has been with the large fan-shaped leaves shading the soils.

Fan-leaved pit pit is definitely a tough plant, thriving in moist, shady, understorey areas, as well as in full sun. It's the broad thick stem you can eat, after peeling back the leaves. Either toss the whole plant onto the barbecue flames for three minutes, or peel, chop and stir-fry.

### JICAMA

In amongst the pit pit, I planted jicama (*Pachyrhizus erosus*) seeds in





A thick bed of Brazilian spinach.

well-prepared holes for optimum tuber development.

As I write, there's a tray of hard, dry, jicama seed pods cracking open in the sun and we've been harvesting the tubers to eat.

#### BRAZILIAN SPINACH

With firm, wavy, crinkle-edged leaves, Brazilian spinach is compact, lush and hardy. Even through the drought, we could pick sturdy stems and leaves to accompany our meals. Also known as South American crinkle salad leaf (*Alternanthera sissoo*), samba lettuce, sissoo spinach or poorman's spinach, it's an attractive, perennial, dense soil hugger forming a thick ground cover. We eat the stems, leaves and small, creamy white flower clusters raw in salads to accompany hot dishes. It's tasty too when steamed or added to stir-fries at the end of cooking. Some folk say, 'Oh, that's Ceylon spinach or Malabar spinach', referring to the twining vine, however sissoo does not



A young Lebanese cress plant.

climb. The strong stems send out adventitious roots as they touch the ground, so propagation is very easy. Mulched up, it's happy in full sun, as well as in a little shade.

#### MY GOAL

My goal is to create perennial beds of edible plants that co-exist happily with each other. The shade-lovers grow underneath, while the sun-lovers are basking up top. Even now, on the sloping banks, I'm aware of beneficial insects moving in; praying mantids are making their foamy egg sacks on plant stems and ladybirds are checking the beans like security guards.

Next time, I'll tell you about some self-seeding annuals I use in the tropics as cover crops to protect the soil and feed us. My 'Many Leaves' catalogue of Unusual and Edible Plants is available. Please send 7 x 50 cent stamps (includes postage) to: Jane 'Many Leaves' Lawrance, PO Box 374, Babinda, Qld 4861. 🌱

#### AN ANNUAL ALTERNATIVE

After I wrote the article for GR 158 about annual green manure cover, I researched a new crop for the summer months. I rang up the seed company to ask whether they had the equivalent of oats for summer planting and was told they had Japanese millet (*Echinochloa utilis*) and sorghum. Sorghum sounded like too much work as it grows very tall (about three metres) and would need to have its coarse five-centimetre-diameter stalks ploughed into the soil.

Millet, growing about a metre high, sounded more appropriate to my needs. It produces only organic matter, there's no nitrogen fixation, but that suited me as I was after weed suppression, which millet is very good for.

The seeds are small so I would only need eight to ten kilograms per acre, compared to twenty kilograms per acre for the oats I'd used in the cooler months. Seed needs to be sprinkled sparingly to ensure each one has optimum space to fully mature and thicken up.

Millet is an annual grass with a short growing period of about two to three months. You can sow it throughout the year, if you want. It's good for summer growing, but slows down in winter. You can harvest the dried seed heads and throw them to the chooks.

I bought 10 kilograms of Japanese millet seed. Now I just have to wait for the summer heat. I'll keep you all posted on how it performs. 🌱

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# THE BIZARRE NAKED NECK

## An Ideal Bird For Very Hot Conditions

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

Bizarre best describes the appearance of the Naked Neck, a heavy-bodied fowl that reputedly originated in Transylvania. If you're not familiar with the breed, they differ from normal-plumaged fowl by having between 25 and 45 percent less feathering. The neck, obviously, is feather free, but as well there are fewer feather tracts on thighs and abdomen, less fluff, and the area surrounding and below the vent is totally bare. With so much skin exposed, Naked Necks cope very well with high temperatures.

In Australia Transylvanian Naked Necks are quite rare. If you were to become fascinated by them and look for stock, it could be a long search. *Grass Roots* readers residing in the Philippines have found this most amusing as many of their village chickens scavenging for a living are naked necked. They proliferate there and in Malaysia and abound also in Central America where they're considered hardy indigenous fowls. It makes sense that this feather mutation is common in hot climates; the reduced feathering provides increased surface areas for facilitating heat loss. The perplexing question is how naked-necked fowls became established in chilly Transylvania.

It's believed birds displaying grossly reduced feathering were brought back to Europe from the East by conquering armies in the 9th century. There is a long history of Naked Necks in Hungary. During World War II almost all livestock was killed or eaten, including the Naked Neck breed, but when hostilities ceased geneticists gathered surviving specimens and bred them to re-establish the local fowl and farm stock. The happy story is that the Naked Neck was successfully conserved and is still bred in Hungary and Romania (where Transylvania is situated). There are numerous colour varieties of both layers and broilers.



This is a purebred Naked Neck and it's clear to see she has greatly reduced feather cover, probably around 40 – 45 percent.



This little hen had one parent a Naked Neck and one fully feathered. She displays only 25 – 35 percent less feathering.

### WHY REDUCED FEATHERING?

Forget possible connections of Naked Necks with Count Dracula, who also hailed from Transylvania. Dismiss too thoughts of cross species dallying, which was the American explanation for reduced feathering in the early decades of the 20th century. Americans

were certain their turkey was involved and called specimens Turkenks. Even dictionaries from the 1930s explained the strange appearance of Naked Necks as the result of crossing a turkey cock with a farmyard hen.

Scientists have found reduced feathering a rewarding area of study and ascribed its presence to a genetic mutation. The latter has resulted in an incompletely dominant gene that modifies feather size and distribution. As the gene has a dominant mode of action, you can mate a bird of the Naked Neck breed with a fully feathered fowl and the offspring will almost all be naked necked. As well, all will have a goatee or bib of feathers just above their crop, which is part of the nonfeathered area. If these offspring were subsequently mated together, their chicks would have considerably less plumage than the parents and virtually no goatee. This outcome occurs because the parents carried a dominant gene for the naked neck plus a recessive gene for normal feather distribution. The chicks then, are likely to carry two doses of the dominant gene, which is for the naked neck, and none of the recessive gene. These chicks, as mentioned, show little incidence of the feather goatee above the crop and from this you can confidently deduce that they are

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Yes, the bare neck looks grotesque and other featherless areas develop reddened skin, but the males are genial natured and fun to have around.

purebreds, not crossbreds. Breeders use the goatee as a simple marker for evaluating the purity of stock.

### RECOGNISING A NAKED NECK

Naked Necks are large framed with a deep compact body, broad back and rounded breast. They display a medium sized upright red comb and red wattles, ear lobes and neck. Eye colour is orange. Plumage colours include black, blue, red (all accompanied by yellow leg colour), and white, buff and cuckoo (with either yellow or white leg colour).

Recommended weights are 3.60 – 4.55 kilograms for adult males and 2.70 – 3.60 kilograms for adult females. This makes them a little heavier than the Australorp, a medium-large fowl.



Miniatures – very uncommon – weigh in at around 910 – 1135 grams for males and 680 – 910 grams for females. Eggs are medium sized with a tinted shell colour.

### UNIQUE FEATURES

The Naked Neck, despite its heavy size, is less affected by heat than fully feathered breeds and displays superior production traits when temperatures exceed 25° C. In everyday terms this means appetite is not depressed by heat so egg lay or carcass growth is maintained. Below 25° C they consume more feed than fully feathered breeds and grow more slowly, making feed conversion poor. When temperatures soar the eggs of Naked Necks don't become smaller, nor do the shells deteriorate, because of the breed's excellent ability to handle biochemical changes.

Studies show that birds carrying the naked neck gene have better feed conversion and produce a greater carcass yield in hot countries than fully feathered birds. Reduced plumage also equates with less time spent on plucking.

A surprising benefit has been the discovery that feather pecking and cannibalism are greatly reduced in chickens with naked necks. This may be because the reduced plumage lowers nutritional needs, especially for protein, or it may be due to the quiet, placid nature that is associated with the breed.

Not surprisingly, overseas commercial producers have investigated the attributes of the naked neck gene and introduced it into both layer and broiler flocks in France and the Middle East. Countries with local populations of fowl displaying reduced feathering have combined the naked neck gene with dwarf and frizzled varieties in order to capitalise on its outstanding characteristics.

### BACKYARD BIRD

Naked Necks are an ideal backyard bird in hot areas. Thought needs to be given to managing stickfast fleas, if they are a potential problem, as the large areas of bare skin offer a smorgasboard to these pesky critters. If you live in a cold area, don't be concerned that your Naked Necks will freeze on their perches. Occasionally young

growing birds do, however, if sheds are built to keep the cold out, your flock will survive, but they will have to eat lots to regulate their body temperature. Without a doubt the advantage of Naked Necks is their tolerance to heat; they really come into their own when the thermometer goes above 30° C.

### CAUTION WITH BREEDING

The downside of the breed is an occasional problem during hatching. It appears in some purebred (the fellows with little or no goatee) strains, but not usually the crossbreds. The purebreds can have up to 40 – 45 percent reduction in feathers (as against the crossbreds, who only have about 30 percent less) and it is the chicks with the least feather cover that cannot get themselves out of the eggs. It is thought they slip around in the eggshell, unable to establish a firm position for rotating their head and pipping the top of the shell so it pops off. Instead they slide around, become exhausted and expire. The crossbred chicks, having greater feather cover, fit snugly in the shell and hatch normally. Not all strains of purebreds are affected, but the better the bird (ie, the less feathers), the more likely are hatching problems.

### OBTAINING STOCK

As Naked Necks are a curiosity and don't appeal to everyone, stock is hard to find. A local poultry club may be able to advise, or a short advertisement in a specialist magazine like *Australasian Poultry* should bring results. There are examples of the breed scattered Australia-wide, you just need to track them down. 🐔

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# WHAT'S ON IN SUMMER

## SPIN OUT

Want to take your spinning to the next level? The Handweavers and Spinners Guild of Victoria is offering a certificate spinning course, run over two years, 2004 – 05. Classes are held on Saturday mornings and enrolment must be by 13 December 2003. Contact the guild at 12-20 Shakespeare St, Carlton North 3054.

## HEAVY HORSES

Gulf Station is featuring everything from blacksmith displays to working draught horses, sheep dog trials and rare breed farm animals at its Pioneer and Working Horse Festival. Hopefully, there will even be the first Clydesdale foal born on the station in 20 years. The old-fashioned farm is a living museum and well worth a look, and there are plenty of wineries to visit in the Yarra Valley on the way home. The festival is on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25 January, Gulf Station, Melba Hwy, Yarra Glen 3775.

## MOORA MOORA BACK

Mt Toolebewong Landcare Group is holding its inaugural festival on the lands of Moora Moora Cooperative near Healesville, Victoria. The theme is living with the land, and there will be talks, displays and demonstrations. Topics include permaculture on farms and in suburbs, and owner building with straw-bale and earth. You can also take a guided tour of the 72 owner-built homes, many with solar energy systems and breathtaking mountain views. There will be an outdoor dance at night, so bring warm clothes. Saturday 28 February, email: [bobrich@bobswriting.com](mailto:bobrich@bobswriting.com), ph: 03-5962-1535.

## SUSTAINABLE EVENT

Drop in to Melbourne's Federation Square from 13 to 15 February to experience the newly relocated Sustainable Living Festival. With over a hundred displays and activities, organisers say this is the largest event in Australia focusing on sustainability and promoting provocative ideas with activities, fun and entertainment. What will be there? Designers, artists, performers,



See the heavy horses at Gulf Farm, Vic.

builders, farmers, chefs and inventors for a start. For more information, visit [www.sustainablelivingfestival.org](http://www.sustainablelivingfestival.org)

## TEXT-ISLE 4

Feeling crafty? Tassie's regional forum on textiles (get it?) is being held near Launceston from 12 to 17 January 2004. On offer are some terrific week-long workshops on subjects like doll making, gold embroidery, basketry, millinery and more. Attendees can get packages for the gala dinner, meals and accommodation, or just the course. Contact Adult Education on 03-6336-2745 for details.

## CONFEST

ConFest has been organised by the Down to Earth Co-op Society for the last 24 years. Summer ConFest will be held from Monday 29 December to Sunday 4 January 2004. Set up a camping spot, relax, avoid sunburn, make friends, and get involved with: workshops, singing, dancing, discussions, alternative technology, the vegetarian market, circus skills

and yoga, and enjoy nature and like-minded others. It's a wonderful experience. Go to [www.dte.org.au](http://www.dte.org.au) for more information.

## PLAY HOOKEY

Actually hooky is a spectacular rug making method. Try one of Narawilly Farm Cottage's rug making classes on proggy and hooky methods to find out more. Classes are held throughout November, December and January. Ring Miriam on 02-4455-6870 or email: [narawillyfarm@shoal.net.au](mailto:narawillyfarm@shoal.net.au) The farm is at Milton, on the south coast of NSW.

## TIME AND LOVE

A contemporary exhibition showcasing handcrafted textiles for loved ones and the bedroom is being held from 6 December to 8 February at the Penrith Regional Gallery and Lewers Bequest. Works include embroidery, knitting, lacework, patchwork, quilting and weaving. One of the artworks is a six kilogram crotchet bedspread made in one piece over 30 years. Now that's time and love. Contact the gallery for times, 86 River Rd, Emu Plains 2750, ph: 02-4735-1100.

## OZ DAY

If you are planning on celebrating Australia Day, there is a website, [www.australiaday.gov.au](http://www.australiaday.gov.au) that lists events being held and activities to do in every state. There are also recipes and tips for an Australia Day lunch or dinner as well as trivia questions to host a quiz with family and friends. ☺

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Nicola Graimes

Even the most committed BBQ addict will be tossing their sausage and reaching for the stuffed yellow capsicums when they see these mouth-watering dishes. Recipes include tasty starters like spiced red lentil and coconut soup, mains such as caramelised onion and thyme tart, some seriously tempting desserts, and a section on breads and baking. There is one recipe with relevant preparation photos and a box containing nutrition notes on each page, making the actual cooking easy work. Entertaining can always be a challenge for vegans, so the introduction runs through some suggested menus and general tips, and there are also possible replacements for dairy products and eggs, as well as nutritional advice for pregnant women, children and teens. With the emphasis on fresh vegetable produce, flavour and creative cooking, you may not be able to keep these recipes to yourself for long.

P/b, 96pp, Pan Macmillan Australia, Level 18, St Martins Tower, 31 Market St, Sydney 2000. Ph: 02-9285-9100. RRP: \$25.00.

### FORM & FOLIAGE GUIDE TO SHRUBS AND TREES

#### COLOUR GUIDE TO FLOWERING PERENNIALS

A Collection of Garden Favourites Series

Susin Leong and Tracey Loughlin

These plump, small-format books contain an array of the most beautiful colour garden photos this office has seen. Rather than being comprehensive, their aim is to present a selection of stunning garden species suited to a variety of climatic conditions. The Form and Foliage Guide has sections on various types of trees and shrubs; deciduous trees, fruit trees, foliage shrubs and so on. Each individual plant entry has growing notes and a description, but frankly, the real strength lies in the photos. If you can't imagine how well the species would look in your garden after a perusal, we'll be astonished. The Colour Guide is similar, but features flowering species arranged in groups of colours for easy mix and match. Both books are ideal for garden planning. And did we mention the photos...

P/b, 500pp, David Stewart, Murdoch Books, GPO Box 2001, Sydney 1045. Ph: 02-4352-7000. RRP: \$19.95 each.

### DON'T BUY WINE WITHOUT ME

Australia's Best Value Drinking 2004

Stuart Gregor

If you are racking your brains over a good wine to take to the Christmas BBQ, here's the solution. This easy to follow guide lists over 200 wines, giving each a star rating and short description that is low on jargon and high on entertainment value. Each entry has a photo of the bottle too so you know what to look for when surrounded by the dizzying array that is out there. Most wines are between \$10 and \$25, though there is a section on 'something special'. The book includes a rundown of the various wine regions with suggestions on rewarding places to visit, and an informative and amusing dictionary of winespeak. Touted as 'the drinker's guide to that happy land where quality outstrips price' this entertaining book probably wouldn't be suitable for a dedicated wine buff, but is excellent for the rest of us.

P/b, 202pp, Text Publishing, 171 La Trobe St, Melb 3000.  
Ph: 03-9272-4797. RRP \$22.00.

### GREENIOLOGY

How to Live Well, be Green and Make a Difference

Tanya Ha

A comprehensive guide to being green that is accessible, modern and has a terrific sense of humour? Yes! More hip than hippie, ex-model, science journalist and campaign manager for Planet Ark, Tanya Ha is living proof you can be green without losing quality of life. Absolutely everything is covered in her book as it goes through each room of the house, including furniture, appliances, fixtures, audits and more, and then of course there's the green garage and garden. Renovating, shopping and grooming get separate chapters, as does bringing up a green baby. The book closes with a brief rundown of today's hot topics (major environmental issues), while extensive notes give sources for further information. Chock full of helpful tips, the book is an excellent reference for what's best value and also best for the world, and will leave you feeling empowered to make a difference.

P/b, 306pp, Allen and Unwin Pty Ltd, 83 Alexander St, Crows Nest 2065. Ph: 02-8425-0100. RRP: \$29.95.

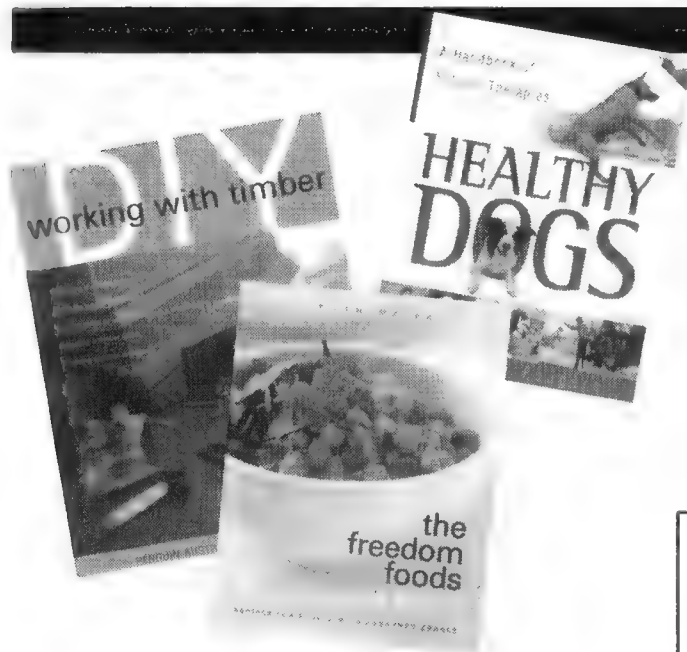
### HABITAT GARDEN

Attracting Wildlife to Your Garden

Peter Grant

Fancy a bandicoot in your bushes, an owl overhead or some parrots on your porch? This book explains how to design and grow a garden that will suit the conditions of your area and support an array of beautiful wildlife. Layered planting, waterwise gardening, propagation of natives, mulching, providing nesting, refuge and water, and limiting threats to native species are just some of the topics explored. Don't despair if you live in arid, alpine or coastal areas, there are chapters on these too. Separate sections on the various types of wildlife are complemented by some great photos and there's a terrific and detailed plan for a pond and habitat water garden. Readers will know that there are times when native birds, insects or animals can become pests and strategies for dealing with this situation are also covered.

P/b, 94pp, ABC Books, GPO Box 9994, Sydney 2001.  
Ph: 1300-360-111. RRP \$27.95.



### HEALTHY DOGS

**A Handbook of Natural Therapies**

**Dr Barbara Fougère**

Those interested in alternative medicine may like to venture beyond Rescue Remedy for their dog with this comprehensive manual of health, nutrition and natural therapy. The first section contains useful information on diet, including a complete recipe guide, and an overview of medicinal herbs, homoeopathy, massage and other therapies. Part two discusses the various health conditions that can affect dogs, from maintaining the systems of the body to treating disease. There is even a section on behavioural problems. Happily, suggestions are grounded in common sense and a good knowledge of doggie behaviour. The author is a practising veterinarian as well as a qualified acupuncturist and natural therapist who is keen to offer dog owners access to natural alternatives to drugs and surgery.

**P/b, 264pp, Hyland House Publishing, PO Box 122, Flemington 3031. Ph: 03-9376-4461. RRP: \$29.00.**

### THE FREEDOM FOODS COOKBOOK

**Recipes for People with Food Intolerance**

**Ruth Maier**

*Grass Roots* is inundated with requests for recipes suitable for people with food allergies, so this book was snatched up with glee when it arrived in our office. Treating any sort of intolerance involves the implementation of lifelong dietary patterns, but this is no reason to succumb to a bland or unappetising diet! Maier's recipes include old favourites like Creole osso bucco and bread and butter pudding, and newbies like nasi goreng and plum whip, and there are plenty of options for both carnivores and vegetarians. Symbols at the bottom of each entry indicate whether the recipe is suitable for those with diabetes, coeliac disease, asthma, cancer, arthritis and a number of other conditions. There are also dietary guidelines, menu plans and shopping lists for each condition. Publisher Freedom Foods is an Australian company that makes low-allergy foods available from the health food section of supermarkets.

**P/b, 162pp, Written Perspectives, 3 Manning St, Potts Point 2011. Ph: 02-99357-1688. RRP: \$19.95.**

### DIY WORKING WITH TIMBER

**Penguin Do-It-Yourself Series**

This really is the Christmas present that keeps on giving: wrap it up for the handy one in the family, then sit back and wait for that blanket box, outdoor table, letter box, wine rack or shelving to be built for you. Terrific return on your investment. The book features handy building projects just about anyone could manage, and contains all the information you need when working with wood, including types and grades of timber available and what tools to use. Owner builders may be interested to hear the book goes into detail on polishing floorboards and restoring old furniture. The large format, step-by-step colour photos, and text in point form make directions easy to follow while you're actually building. Good luck.

**P/b, 58pp, Penguin Books Australia, PO Box 701, Hawthorn 3122. Ph: 03-9811-2400. RRP: \$12.95.**

### AUSTRALIA'S OPEN GARDEN SCHEME GUIDE

Yes, it's out. Start planning your weekends! The 2003 - 04 book lists the 650 outstanding gardens open to the public as part of the Open Garden Scheme. This year's edition is revised and redesigned, with full colour photographs and lively articles from garden writers, including one on organics. Entries give you the style of garden, how to get there, cost of entry, and suitability for kids and the disabled.

**P/b, 160pp, ABC Books, GPO Box 9994, Sydney 2001.**

**Ph: 02-8333-3969. RRP: \$16.95.**

### THE LITTLE THINGS DIARY

**Andrew Cooper**

Want to contribute to the environment but not sure where to start? Take it each day at a time. This 13-month diary features a fascinating fact, useful tip or helpful suggestion for every weekday of the year, with topics ranging from the environment in general to your own workplace, home and garden. The overall effect is to make sustainability something everyone could achieve at home in myriad simple ways. The diary has a modern, bright, colourful design and is hardy and spiral bound. It would make an excellent Christmas present.

**H/b, 132pp, The Little Things Diary, PO Box 2845, Seaford 3198. Ph: 0408-864-660. Email: thelittlethings@hotmail.net.au for stockists. RRP: \$17.**

### TWELVE PRINCIPLES

**Living with Integrity in the Twenty-First Century**

**Martin Hawes**

This inspiring and positive book presents profiles of people from around the globe who are exploring creative ways to meet modern challenges. In their own small way, they have all changed the world. The profiles include the story of a schoolgirl from the South Bronx who joined Global Kids almost by accident and found herself in war-torn Croatia facilitating peace workshops for Serb and Croat youths, and a lawyer who got jail inmates to take up gardening, saw their recidivism rates plummet and now distributes thousands of kilos of produce to charities and poor schools. The profiles are organised into 12 principles that together express the need to live intelligently, connected to the whole of life. If you ever feel a little jaded with the world, this is the book to refresh your spirits.

**P/b, 144pp, Finch Publishing Pty Ltd, PO BOX 120, Lane Cove 1595. Ph: 02-9418-6247. RRP: \$24.95.**

## ROUND THE MARKET PLACE

We hope you enjoy this feature introducing new products relevant to readers' lifestyles and interests.



### ORGANIC MAPLE SYRUP

Pure maple syrup, as distinct from the imitation made with corn syrup, is hard to find. Even harder to find is organic maple syrup. The World Whole Foods company, under their Global Organics brand, has recently released in Australia just such a product. Made in Canada, Global Organics maple syrup is available in Grade A, the most popular for everyday use as a topping, and Grade C, darker and stronger in flavour and used in cooking. The taste testers in the GR office, while admitting to not being maple syrup aficionados, enjoyed the delicate, fresh flavour of the sample. The recommended price for

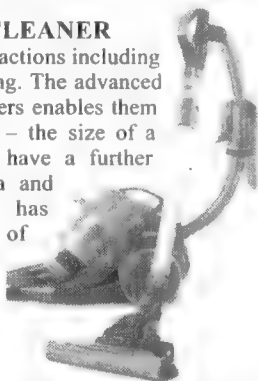
a 250-millilitre bottle is \$12.95 for Grade A and \$11.95 for Grade C. The product is available from a range of supermarkets and health stores.

**For more information or to find your closest stockist ph: 1300-653-663, or visit the website: [www.worldwholefoods.com](http://www.worldwholefoods.com)**

### HIGH FILTRATION VACUUM CLEANER

Dust in the surroundings can trigger allergy reactions including asthma, rhinitis, rashes, sneezing and coughing. The advanced filtration technology of Dyson vacuum cleaners enables them to catch particles as small as 0.01 microns – the size of a particle of cigarette smoke. Some models have a further bacteria-killing screen to eradicate bacteria and moulds. The British Allergy Foundation has awarded seals of approval to the Dyson range of vacuum cleaners.

**For more information or to find stockists contact Michael Locke on 02-9540-0407, email: [michael@dyson.com.au](mailto:michael@dyson.com.au), or visit [www.dyson.com.au](http://www.dyson.com.au)**

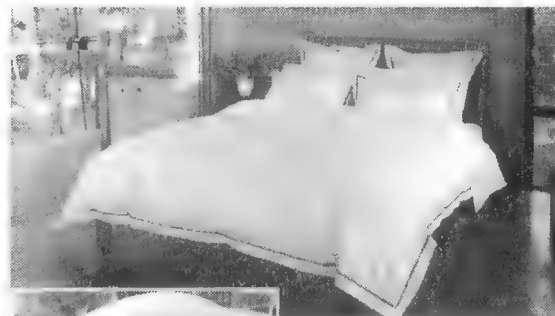
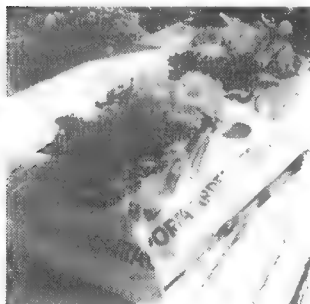


### PORTAGARDEN GROWBAG

Anyone with restricted space for gardening will find a use for these purpose-designed Growbags. They are simply plastic bags filled with growing medium, and look similar to a large bag of potting mix. You slit the bottom of the bag for drainage, cut out the marked squares on the top and plant your chosen vegies, herbs or flowers directly in the bag. They are more suited to growing smaller plants, but this still gives a huge range of possibilities, and

larger plants could perhaps be grown with some support provided. Bags can be placed on an elevated platform for those who have trouble bending, or inside a decorative surround to make them more aesthetically pleasing. There is no digging, no weeding and little watering. After the crop has been harvested the growing medium can be recycled onto the garden.

**For more details ph: 03-5792-3630, email: [info@portagarden.com.au](mailto:info@portagarden.com.au), or check the website: [www.portagarden.com.au](http://www.portagarden.com.au)**



### ORGANIC COTTON BEDDING

Not only is it now possible to buy a range of organically grown cotton bedding, it is also naturally coloured. Yes, cotton wasn't always just white,

it once grew in a range of subtle natural colours and now breeding programs have rekindled some of these soft browns and greens. The EcoDownUnder company markets a range of enviro-friendly bedding, which is said to be resin free and anti-allergenic. For those who prefer white bedding, an oxygen-bleached range is available. All bedding products are made from superfine cotton percale and are a far cry from the chunky rough-textured image often held of organic fibres. Also available are organic cotton, naturally coloured towels.

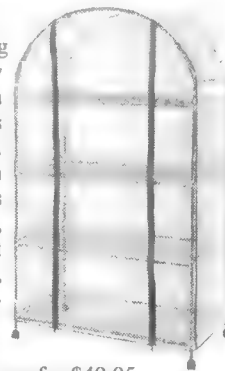
**For more information contact Tim Ower or Russell Lamb on 02-9986-2299, or look at the website: [www.ecodownunder.com](http://www.ecodownunder.com)**

### MINI GREENHOUSE

A useful idea for anyone wanting to propagate more than a few punnets of seeds but less than will fit in a whole greenhouse has just been released by BIG W. A set of four shelves made from powder-coated green tubing is covered by zippered, clear, removable plastic. The unit measures 155 centimetres high, 69 centimetres deep and 49 centimetres wide and is mounted on castors for easy moving.

Available from all BIG W stores for \$49.95.

**For more information ph: 1800-251-311, or visit the website: [www.bigw.com.au](http://www.bigw.com.au)**



### VITAMIN C SKIN CREAM UPDATE

The vitamin C skin cream reviewed on this page in GR 158 had an incorrect phone number. Anyone wanting more information should ring 1800-355-890.



## DOWN HOME ON THE FARM

by Megg Miller.

'Honestly, I can do without this', I told the dog as she leant against me, trembling violently. A clap or two of thunder had reduced her to a state of panic so I was offering grudging support and waiting the storm out on the verandah. Rain had sent me scurrying from the car as I packed some books in readiness for departing. Judging by the dog's chattering teeth and clinging behaviour, I'd be verandah bound for some time. There was no chance of phoning work to explain my delay either; the heavens had opened and my little mobile only works when I'm standing in the middle of the road outside the front gate. Plans for the morning were fast disintegrating.

The day hadn't started well. I'd slept lightly, pursued in my dreams by sheep, turkeys and foxes. The outline of a turkey gobbler snoozing on the gatepost had caught my eye as I'd driven in the night before and a quick look at the sheds had shown an open door and the usual occupants absent. With hungry foxes around, that was worrying, but what really made me cross was two abandoned nests of eggs. The culprits had to be the sheep, who enjoy barging in and scaring off the hens. The fact that they kept far away from me and accept-

ed the lack of bread without even a bleat pointed to their complicity. And I thought they were going to be easy, cooperative sheep!

The long and short of it was that the turkey toms had taken to the trees for the night and were disinclined to return to their shed next morning, when temporary blindness or forgetfulness meant we walked up and down past their sheds and open doorways for half an hour. Even the lure of food inside failed. I was getting hot and bothered and they were clearly disinclined to give up the freedom of open spaces. I went back to the wheelbarrow and feeding, returning later for another attempt, but the cagey turks congregated under a tree and all that happened was we walked around the trunk like figures on a merry-go-round. The sheep, I suspect, enjoyed the performance. I gave them their daily rations without a word, and they in turn feigned indifference. Just as well the gander on guard at the nearby A-frame had the common sense to keep his bill closed. Usually he hissed provocatively, but his inactivity saved him from a whack with the bucket. The thunder and dark clouds reflected my state of mind.

The storm eventually abated; I

grabbed my bag and got into the car. A glance up at the sheds as I drove out showed the one open door, but no sign of turkeys nearby. 'Maybe the rain drove them inside', I thought, getting out to investigate. It's quite a walk, their shed is the last in a line of 11, and it seemed further because the grass was long and wet. Mr Turkey was happily parading inside while the errant hens had returned to their now chilled and useless clutches of eggs. Click, they were safely locked in. As I closed the front gate the dear old dog came down the drive, determinedly hastening her arthritic joints and sending silent pleas not to be left alone. I felt a heel, but truly, I'd had enough. The thought of my office desk and comfy chair was too appealing.

Even more appealing was the invitation to visit the kids in Melbourne. 'Come and see my new fish pond', Suni invited, 'and we can do some late-night shopping'. What a treat, not just the opportunity to visit some decent shops, but being driven down too. It was bliss to admire gardens without risking damage to my car and to get a good dose of tidy suburban streets. Ten minutes would easily mow most front lawns and verges - what a lifestyle.

A line-up of coloured plastic buckets met us as we walked up Suni's path. 'What are they for?' I enquired, noticing they were full of water. 'That's Marcie's recycling, he doesn't like to waste the bath water so he buckets it out and puts it on the garden.' I was almost speechless, here was a man after my own heart.



Sprung! Maria the Maremma is caught hoeing in to the chook food.



These two crazy turkeys led Megg on a merry dance recently.

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**For a catalogue:** Julie Phillips  
ph: 07-3841-8844

email: [foods@ihug.com.au](mailto:foods@ihug.com.au)  
(Wholesale enquiries welcome.)



'Fancy getting a son-in-law who's into bucketing the bath water', I marvelled. The shopping was good, but seeing those full buckets was what really tickled my fancy.

A bath full of water can cause unforeseen problems. The kids' indolent, placid cat found this out just last week. Pablo is pretty much the perfect cat, his most aggressive act is to out-stare the neighbours' old moggies and as for catching birds, he's scared of most things that move, including his own shadow. Dirty socks and a rubber mouse are challenging prey to him. This means he doesn't jump on benches and steal food from the table. When Suni heard a loud splash and a howl recently she was perplexed as to what it could be. Suddenly, a bedraggled wet cat rushed past her, meowing piteously and shaking each leg in turn. 'Oh Pablo', she said, 'what have you done?' He had to be towelled dry and finished with the hair drier as he was soaked to the skin. Suni said that when she walked into the bathroom later with him he stiffened at the sight of the water and meowed horribly. We think he must have been having a little drink and slipped in, poor fellow. He's very chary about entering the bathroom now.

I've got horrible memories of finding something in the cold bath water as a young newlywed. We were reliant on rainwater tanks so the bath water had to be kept for the garden and one morning I found a large grey rodent in it. Yuk! I shrieked appropriately and waited for my hero to come home and get rid of it. I was terrified for months afterwards that I'd find another. These days I wouldn't blink

an eye. Greywater gadgets are a little easier than buckets though, and when I move to my cottage I'll go that way.

While there are no imminent plans for moving, I've been delegated to host our family Christmas festivities this year in my little cottage. A meal Christmas night for seven or eight shouldn't be too difficult I know, especially as everyone brings a dish to help out. Mind you, I'll be calling on Suni for ideas and advice, especially on using my new stove. It's had one or two trial runs, but I admit to being a novice with baked fare. Fresh and raw is my style, and hopefully my

carrot crop won't have gone to seed by then. The vegie garden is flash at the moment, with lots of different salad greens, snow peas, broad beans, silver-beet and asparagus. The tomatoes, peppers, eggplant and zucchini are hardening up ready for transplanting; beetroot seed has been sown, plus more lettuce and basil. If we're lucky, some of the potatoes may be ready to harvest in late December. Christmas is a time for sharing and giving from the heart; what a thrill to be able to contribute food from your own garden. Now I must find some recipes . . . 🍀

## PENPALS

I'll write to anyone who writes to me. My special interests are Melbourne, chooks, poetry (esp WB Yeats), Zen, birds, trees, people born in the 40s, and foreign languages. I would like to hear from Yvonne and Daniel again and perhaps Aaryn, Elsie, Yolanda, Bronya, B Pope and Jayson might care to write. I haven't got land of my own now, but I like to hear about others. Dozens of stamps and postmarks to exchange.

**John La Roche**

**PB 11023, PALMERSTON NORTH,  
NEW ZEALAND.**

I'm a 15-year-old girl seeking a penpal. I would prefer a penpal between the ages of 14 and 18. I'm a typical teenage girl who likes to have fun. I'm into music and dancing and hanging out with friends plus much more. Please write if you're looking for a penpal like me.

**Nicole Cooper,**

**PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.**

Honest, professional, single woman (no children), 30s, seeks penpal with interest in horses and sustainable, chemical-free living.

**Cath,**

**PO Box 1714, BYRON BAY 2481.**

I am a 24-year-old female with an interest in health, fitness, travel and music. I live in country South Australia and would like to correspond with genuine, down-to-earth people with similar interests.

**Email: isha1978@hotmail.com**

I am a 36-year-old single mum of two children aged 9 and 6. I own my house and work, so I don't have much time for anything else. I would like to keep in contact with anyone around the same age with regard to gardening, cooking, family life etc.

**K Britton,**

**PO Box 1369, BOWEN 4805.**



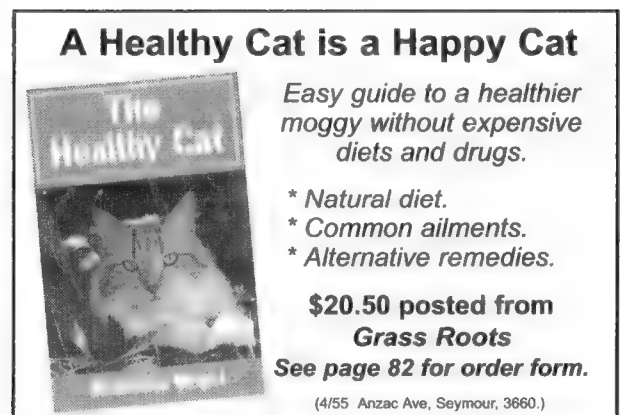
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**A Healthy Cat is a Happy Cat**

*Easy guide to a healthier moggy without expensive diets and drugs.*

- \* Natural diet.
- \* Common ailments.
- \* Alternative remedies.

**\$20.50 posted from  
Grass Roots**  
**See page 82 for order form.**

(4/55 Anzac Ave, Seymour, 3660.)

# GRASSIFIEDS

## HOW TO ADVERTISE

Use the form provided below, or a separate sheet of paper, to print your advertisement clearly, **not in block capitals**, including correct punctuation. If you have more than one ad please print each one on a separate page. Remember to include an address or phone number in your advertisement. Count the number of words and multiply by 85 cents per word (phone number counted as one word) to work out the total cost of your advertisement. Send **with payment** to Grass Roots, PO Box 117, Seymour 3661, before the deadline and we'll include your advertisement in the next issue of Grass Roots. **Deadline for GR 161 is 19 December, 2003.** Please do not fax ads.

Sender's Name ..... For issues no/s .....

Address ..... Classification .....

..... Postcode ..... Cost .....

**Cost for advertisements is 85c per word**

## PROPERTY FOR SALE

### NEW SOUTH WALES

**NORTH-WEST OF GLEN INNES** 23 km, 526 tranquil ac with building permit. Steel frame of shed with Colorbond roof. Lovely undulating bush block with lots of potential. Three dams, spring water. \$90,000. Ph: 02-6732-2839.

**PRISTINE BUSHLAND**, 1000 ac, waterfall, Keowon Valley, Grenfell. Ph: 02-6343-7130. \$ POA. Website: [www.geocities.com/zimfisher/mybrundahfalls.html](http://www.geocities.com/zimfisher/mybrundahfalls.html)

**NORTH-WEST NSW**, 700 ac, 6 dams, 1 bore, 4 bed home renovated 2002-03, 240 power & ph connected. Wee Waa 32 km, Narrabri 55 km. All-weather rd, water is a feature of this property, no problems in the last drought, steel cattle yards, many outbuildings. \$280,000. Ph: Graham, 02-6795-6000, 0427-250-218.

**MID NORTH COAST, NAMBUCCA VALLEY** hinterland, 125 ac, abundant wildlife, resident koalas, dam & two tanks, 2 b/r livable shed & loft. Organic fruit & nut trees, 5 ac cleared, remainder native forest & r/forest. School bus at gate. Alternative, private & public level house site. Gas fridge, stove & hot water, generator, power close. \$179,000. Ph: Lizette, 02-6656-2553, 0404-947-631.

**FAR SOUTH COAST**, 120 ac bush block with 2 10 ac clearings at Mt Darragh. All-year running crk, livable shed 12 m x 6 m, ph, 45 mins to Pambula Beach. Ph: Steve, 03-5476-2238.

**FAR NORTH COAST:** Beautiful coastal bungalow, 15 mins nth of Byron Bay. Landscaped tropical garden, 3 b/r light-filled modern house, 10 mins walk to ocean beach. \$385,000. Ph: 02-6680-4957.

**EDEN, FAR SOUTH-EAST NSW**, approx 40 km, 120 ac crkfront bushland. Great soil, water, wildlife, seclusion. Reduced to \$72,000. Also, 220 ac riverfront, nth facing slope, opposite nat pk, ultra private. Reduced to \$99,000. Ph: 02-4784-1020 for details.

**BELLINGEN ON THE MID NORTH COAST.** Complete 3 site MO, 10 mins drive to the picturesque town of Bellingen on sealed rd. One handmade mudbrick house, a working pottery, sheds, gravelled internal rds, no chemicals used for at least 20 years, not logged for over 20 years, dry sclerophyll forest with r/forest remnants, cleared only around house, powered by passive solar principles & photovoltaic panels, r/water tanks, lge dam, crk, f/trees. \$420,000. Ph: John Tuckwell, 02-6655-2046 or [kalval@iprimus.com.au](mailto:kalval@iprimus.com.au)

**GARDEN OF EDEN** (freehold) for \$800,000. A magnif 900 sq m homestead (7 b/rs, 3 bath-rooms, with accom for 12 people + saltwater pool) set in 1750 ac (708.22 ha) property of secluded, virgin native forest endowed with original flora & fauna. This is a once-in-a-lifetime development opportunity ideal for permaculture community, health retreat B & B, wilderness camping & more. This secluded estate on the edge of Pilliga State Forest near Wee Waa has

perennial crk & unlimited drinking water bore, estab poultry run, rabbit hutches, f/trees & screened garden of sandy loam. Ph: 02-6796-2204. Pictures & details on application to: [mandelsloh@hotmail.com](mailto:mandelsloh@hotmail.com)

### QUEENSLAND

**SUNSHINE COAST HINTERLAND:** Unique 126 ac, adj state forest, top of water chain, spring-fed dams, frost free, 3 b/r Q/lander. \$350,000. Ph: 07-4939-8075. Email: [schandi@cqnet.com.au](mailto:schandi@cqnet.com.au)

**TWO TO THREE BEDROOM HOME** on 10 lovely ac next to nat pk. Full solar (24W - 12V), gas cooking/hot water, 2 x 5000 gal tanks (full), lge dam with solar pump to 1000 gal tank for plants. Fully fenced house yard with 2 lge sheds. \$90,000 incl \$10,000 for company shares. Ph: 07-4129-9259.

**KOOKABURRA PARK ECO-VILLAGE**, stage 4 now selling, 20 blocks released, only 8 left in less than 6 weeks. If you want to be part of this unique community contact today, prices rising all the time. Ph: 07-4153-1303, [www.nbre.com.au](http://www.nbre.com.au)

**HERBERTON/SILVERVALLEY**, 6 ac, lovely stone & timber cottage, dam, water tanks, generator, power, bushland with crk flat (isolated). \$70,000 ONO. Ph: 07-4096-2265, 0429-787-789.

**NANANGO, QLD**, 8+ ac (with crk), unimproved. Water & elec avail. \$36,000. Ph: 02-4990-9635.

# GRASSIFIEDS

## PROPERTY FOR SALE QUEENSLAND

**MOUNT MORGAN**, 35 km to Rockhampton: Main b/r – en suite, with attached 20' x 12' cabin, new bathroom, sep toilet, lge open plan living area incl lge BBQ/entertainment under shade-cloth. Western red cedar with beautiful gardens. Ph: 07-4938-2139 for photos & other info.

**CURRA, 15 MINUTES TO GYMPIE**, 3 b/r, sun-room, deck, dam, shed & more on 2 1/2 ac. \$145,000. Ph: 07-5481-6677. Website: [www.petersenpublications.com.au/house](http://www.petersenpublications.com.au/house)

**PERMACULTURE IN THE NOOSA HINTERLAND**: Spacious family home with stunning views to Mount Cooroy, 4 mins to Eumundi market village, 8 mins to Cooroy (home of active Permaculture Noosa group), 15 mins to Noosa main beach. These 1.5 ac, chemical free for 6 years, comprise lush tropical gardens & lawns, retrofit permaculture gardens, estab fruit & nut orchard & recently planted bushfood area. House has 3 b/rs, study/office & teenager's retreat – both with own outside access – inground swimming pool, enormous shed/workshop & lge reticulated shadehouse. Water no problem with 3 r/water tanks, bore & natural dam. All offers around \$500,000 considered. Ph: 07-5442-7120.

**MILLMERRAN, SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND**, 20 fertile ac. Cleared house site, rural residential area, tar-sealed rd, dam, lovely peaceful bush setting, power & ph avail. \$18,000 ONO. Ph: 07-4695-4160.

**STANTHORPE**, 37 1/2 ac natural bush in secluded valley, crk. Comfortable 2 b/r home, solar powered, new kitchen, combustion stove & heater. Close to nat pk & wineries, 15 mins town. \$125,000. Ph: 07-4683-4254.

**MILLMERRAN**, 250 ac, f/hold. \$44,800 ONO. Ph: Chris, 08-8948-1609.

## VICTORIA

**ST ARNAUD**, house & land for sale, approx 6 km from PO, comprising 4 b/rs all with BIRs, full en suite + WIR to master b/r, study & billiards room, lge kitchen-dining area, Coonara heater in lounge room, 20 sq of living space. House is set on 20 ac with panoramic views, verandahs front & rear. Rainwater supply to house is 70,000 lt, has an excel solar system & wind generator. Olive trees & lavender have been planted. This property offers a comfortable lifestyle with a possible small business enterprise. \$167,000 ONO. Ph: Lynda or Colin, 03-5495-2556.

**SECLUDED COTTAGE, HARROW**, 1 hr to Hamilton or Horsham. Beautiful yurt-style, cedar/limestone, on 3 ac, magnif views. Permaculture garden, 30 fruit & nut trees. Town/rain water, solar power, SCS hot water. Five mins walk to historic village & clear river. \$95,000 ONO. Ph: 03-5574-2273, or 03-5149-7240.

DEADLINES: GR 161 – 19 DECEMBER  
GR 162 – 27 FEBRUARY

**IN THE BEAUTIFUL BUCHAN VALLEY**, close to river & Buchan Caves Park, built in 1992 on 1 1/2 ac: solid brick heritage-style 2 b/r residence with adjoining bed-sit with en suite. Two units (1 & 2 b/r), both let to perm tenants, 20 x 20 garage. Pleasantly landscaped, easy care. Suit retired lady or couple looking for income. Lovely lifestyle. Price \$260,000. Contact Colleen for detailed profile: 03-5155-9262.

**CARAMUT** (40 mins to Warmambool): Newly clad 3 b/r house, 2 lounge rooms, Coonara heating, 2 car garage plus sleepout. 1/4 ac vegie garden, 10 assorted f/trees, garden sheds & 20,000 gal water tank, all on 1/2 ac block. \$95,000. Ph: 03-5599-8214.

## TASMANIA

**NORTH-EAST TASMANIA**, private artist's studio/cottage, 'creatively unique'. Scope for expansion, sep cabin b/r, 1/2 ac, self-suff gardens, sml herb nursery business, scenically beautiful, abundant resources. Cash buyer. Ph: 03-6354-6323.

**RELAXED LIFESTYLE**. Eaglehawk Neck – spectacular scenery, great fishing, swimming, surfing. Scenic hr to Hobart. Two b/r home, 25' x 40' Colorbond shed on 4355 m<sup>2</sup>, backing nat pk. Creek, spring-fed dam, chook house, fenced vegie garden, 8000 gal tanks, loads level parking. South-east Tassie is calling this summer. \$180,000. Ph: 03-6250-3011.

**FORTY-EIGHT ACRES** set up for self-suff home, sheds, garden orchard, fenced paddocks, old-growth trees, plenty water. Coast 10 km, private location. \$90,000. Ph: 03-6423-1321.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**MID-WEST WESTERN AUSTRALIA**, 70 ac undulating granite loam in reliable r/fall area. Colonial rammed earth home, lge shed, 7500 gal r/water tank, 1200 gal/hr equipped bore with 12,000 gal holding tank; 300 citrus trees, 200 passionfruit vines, 7000 asparagus crowns, plastic laid & reticulated for cucurbits etc. Established markets for all produce. Three km from town with 2 primary schools & junior high. Bus to senior high school 50 km away in major township. \$340,000 ONO. WIWO negotiable with full working plant. Health reasons for selling. Ph/fax: 08-9934-1368.

**SOUTH-WEST OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**, 78 ac, pasture, winter crk, dam (fish), windmill, 2 – 3 bed accom, solar & wind power, Enviroloo, lge sheds, miniature horses, tractor, vehicles,

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notify us of any change of contact details so we can redirect enquiries.  
Call us on 03-5792-4000. ☘

tools etc. WIWO, negotiable around \$125,000. Ph: 08-9821-0567.

## FOR RENT/CARETAKER WANTED

**SELF-CONTAINED TWO-BEDROOM FARM COTTAGE**, 20 km from Coolah, NSW. Minimum 2 nights. Reasonable rates. One hr to Warrumbungle Mountains, 80 mins to Mudgee, Dubbo. Quiet, plenty of animal & bird life. Ph: 02-6377-1011.

**ROOM FOR RENT WITH SHARED FACILITIES**, Kinglake area, 1 hr Melbourne. House on 5 ac, quiet, tranquil setting. Vegetable garden, orchard, chooks. Nonsmoker, earthy, pets welcome. \$45 p/w plus share expenses. Ph: Jay, 03-5786-5138. Email: [jase\\_young@yahoo.com](mailto:jase_young@yahoo.com)

## COMMUNITY SHARES

**AN ASSOCIATION OF MOTIVATED FAMILIES** & individuals, with a shared vision of a cohesive community with a strong respect for the environment, is seeking to acquire a site of up to 1000 ac to establish an ecovillage containing approx 50 households. The Association is currently undertaking a feasibility analysis of a suitable site. The estimate of the cost to acquire a share in the proposed cooperative, which would bring with it the right to construct one dwelling, is \$50,000. Further info is available by writing to: The Secretary, Shoalhaven Ecovillage, PO Box 14, Saint Georges Basin 2540, or from web: [www.shoalhaven.net.au/~romaine/ecovillage/web](http://www.shoalhaven.net.au/~romaine/ecovillage/web)

**LOW COST RURAL LAND SHARING COMMUNITY (NANDIRI)**, between Port Macquarie & Crescent Head, next to Limeburners wilderness area. Five km to deserted beaches, 20 km to port. 1.2 ac on 560 ac. Committed to environmental sensitivity, sustainable land use practices, wildlife protection. Big hill, good views, quarry for rd making, good soil. Initially a primitive camping permit will allow us to work and play. Deadline for settlement possibly 3 years. No cats, dogs, cloven-foot animals. Thirty shares at \$20,000. Ph: Greg, 02-6653-4601, Tony, 02-6566-0890. Email: [jaahn@optusnet.com.au](mailto:jaahn@optusnet.com.au)

**SHARE WITH HOUSE** in estab MO community of four households, 140 ac, 35 mins from Bega. Organic garden, orchard, poultry, milking goats, beef cattle. VCA, perm crk & forest. School bus to front gate. Option to rent before buying. Approx \$120,000. Ph: 02-6493-2032 or 02-6493-2109.

## PROPERTY WANTED

**THIRTY ACRES, BUSH BLOCK** around Millmerran/Tara/Kogan/Chinchilla areas. Between \$5000 & \$7000 on vendor terms. I can afford to pay \$1000 deposit & \$160 per month. Ph: 0417-193-524 or write to: PO Box 272, SHEPPARTON, Vic 3630.

# GRASSIFIEDS

## PROPERTY WANTED

**WANTED NORTHERN NSW**, small property, rural, old house, east New England Highway. To 1000 000. Ph: 0400-606-827.

**COITAGE WANTED IN QUEENSLAND**  
**COUNTRY** town for woman pensioner. Three b/w, to \$35,000. Ph: 0413-910-444.

## FOR SALE

**115 'GRASS ROOTS' MAGAZINES**, numbers 11 to 159, *Veggie Gardeners Companion*, *Bumper Book*, *Earth Builders Companion*, *Family Book*, *Trimado Reader*. Best offer. Ph: 0438-596-604.

**120 RHEEM SOLAR HOT WATER PANELS** with header tank. \$150. Ph: 02-4567-2131, Bidjup

**'GRASS ROOTS'**: 31, 33, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 67, 68, 69, 72. \$3.50 ea + post. Ph: 07-4497 5287.

**WOOD STOVE**, Daniels & Co, 'Scotia', complete with tools & hot water container. Good condition. \$1500. Ph: 07-5439-9519 AH.

**FINGER TREADLE SEWING MACHINE**, ex factory (operating electric motor attached). \$450. Ph: 07-5439-9519 AH.

**EARTH WORM AND CASTING SEPARATOR** for sale: 1 brand new, unused, electric Vermicore Rotor 2000 separator. Separates 1000 kg per hr. POA. Ph: 02-6747-1724. Email: richardwick@northnet.com.au

**'GRASS ROOTS'** (107 in total) in good condition. \$300 + post. Ph: 02-9620-2064, mobile: 0402-080-098.

**RUSSIAN 'HAND-POWERED' DYNAMO FLASHLIGHTS**: Just squeeze the handle to produce light. Buy direct from the importer, \$20 incl p&h. Send money order or cheque to: D A Van Zanten, PO Box 170, URUNGA, NSW 2455. Enquiries: Dan, 02-6655-6604. Or buy direct from website: [www.australianexports.com.au](http://www.australianexports.com.au)

## OPPORTUNITIES

**ORGANIC GARDENER** with diminished eyesight seeks working partner to continue present project. He himself is still fully active on 10 ac property. Ph: 07-4684-3258 after dark.

**FREE ACCOMMODATION** and free meals when not working, for help on GR farm, sth of Stanthorpe, Qld, n/s only. Seasonal work in district. Ph: 07-4684-5124 after 7pm.

**SPECIAL ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE**, 900 sq m furnished stately homestead on 1750 ac, pristine heritage timber environment, wildlife abounds, perennial crk & drinking bore water, 7 b/w (2 with en suites), 3 lounges, o/fire, 2 dining rooms, 2 kitchens with pantry, 2 toilet/bathrooms, office/sewing room, outbuildings & swimming pool. Forty-five mins to vibrant northern NSW town. Available for lease or purchase on terms. Ph: 08-8355-2390, or 0405-207-397 for more info.

## PLACING AN AD?

See page 75 for details

**COMPANION/CARER WANTED**: mature, n/s, with driver's licence, to live with intelligent older lady who shares rural property with her family. Household help, driving, gardening. Centrelink payment plus free rent in nice home near Bellingen. Ph: 02-6655-1005.

**ACCOMMODATION/SHARE OPPORTUNITY**. Large community near Nimbin, NSW. Rent b/r, sometimes share rest cottage. Prefer bush-savvy person wanting community life. Details: 02-6689-0394.

**EARN MONEY FROM HOME**. Work smarter not harder. Call 02-8230-0913 (24 hrs), or visit: [www.hereisyoursuccess.com](http://www.hereisyoursuccess.com)

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**FOCUS CRAFTS, BYRON BAY**, has operated in 2 superb, main st locations for 15 yrs. The goodwill & 5 x 5 lease on Janson/Marvel is for sale - \$150,000. Located next to Westpac, opposite the bus stop & train station, any business except clothing is permissible. Be part of the incredible growth & vision of Byron Bay, ready for the busy summer. Ph: 02-6684-7512.

## WANTED TO RENT/ CARETAKE

**HOUSESITTER AVAILABLE**, Feb-Mar-April, mature, n/s, s/d, honest, reliable, loves animals, gardens. Refs. Ph: 02-6332-1670, message. Mobile: 0412-038-361 AH.

## PUBLICATIONS

**'A PRIMITIVE DIET' & More of A Primitive Diet for Young and Old** by Bev Southam. Two books of information & recipes of gluten-free, yeast-free, sugar-free, dairy-free food especially for those with allergies & intolerances, coeliac disease, candida albicans, asthma, eczema, high cholesterol, anyone wanting to improve their health. Send chq/money order for \$19.95 each or \$30 for both (incl postage) to: Bev Southam, PO Box 37, QUAAMA, NSW 2550. Ph: 02-6493-8490.

**STEINER EDUCATION & HOMESCHOOLING BOOKS**. Alan Whitehead, PO Box 329, BLACKHEATH 2785. Ph: 02-4787-5335. Website: [www.users.bigpond.com/goldenbeetlebooks/](http://www.users.bigpond.com/goldenbeetlebooks/)  
**MORE MONEY. NEED SOME!** Paying bills & none left for the good things. Indispensable book about recycling, nontoxic cleaning, money management & shopping. Hundreds of better living ideas. Comes with free notebook & pen, free calculator, free gift voucher, free Solution Pack. Ph: 08-9751-5688 9am - 5pm. Fax: 08-9751-5699.

Email: [richandsmart@westnet.com.au](mailto:richandsmart@westnet.com.au)

**SUPPRESSED & UNUSUAL TECHNOLOGIES CATALOGUE**: Free energy devices, antigravity, hydrogen fuel, magnetic motors, alternate fuels & engines, high mileage, 200+ topics. Send 5 x Aust 50c stamps to: Lostech Archive, PO Box 456-R, TOLGA, Qld 4882, Australia.

**'JUST CHOOKS'** 2004 calendar by Sally Baker-Beall (as seen in *Australasian Poultry* magazine). Full colour, \$12 incl post. Cheque/money order only. Ph/fax: 02-4878-9157. ABN: 90600497304.

**'THE MIRACLE OF MULCH'** by Mary Horsfall: Everything you need to know about mulch to save water, save money, improve soil & have a healthy, lush, productive garden. Great gift for the gardeners in your life. \$20 for signed copy from author, incl postage, \$35 for two. Ph: 0417-569-411, or write to: Notable Products, PO Box 101, EUROA 3666.

**'STEPPING STONES FOR HOME EDUCATORS'** is an excellent 40-page quarterly designed to inform & inspire homeschoolers across Australia. Published since 1995. \$8 single, \$30 for 4 to: Grace Chapman, MS 1877, MALANDA, Qld 4885.

**HOME EDUCATION**, for info send SAE to: Alternative Education Resource Group, PO Box 461, DAYLESFORD 3460.

**'NIMBIN NEWS MAGAZINE'**, is a cooperatively run access magazine with articles & information from Nimbin and other areas. We cover concerns relevant to alternative lifestyles & others looking for the most sustainable way. We are one of the longest running alternative magazines & the Nimbin bioregion is at the forefront in the development of sustainable systems. As networkers we scan many mags for suitable & scarce information for our readers. Subscription: 6 issues for \$20, sample \$3.50. Back copies 5 for \$12 post-ed. PO Box 209, NIMBIN 2480. *Beyond the Rainbow* - literacy mag. Sub: \$18 per year for 6 editions. Email: [nimbinnews@nrg.com.au](mailto:nimbinnews@nrg.com.au)

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**HOME STONE FLOUR MILLS** – mill your own stoneground wholemeal flour for cakes and bread at home with a Retsel Little Ark stone flour mill. Endorsed by Housewives Association. Write for catalogue to: Retsel Distributors, PO Box 712, DANDENONG 3175, encl 3 postage stamps. Ph: 03-9795-2725. Distributor enquiries welcome. Website: [www.retsel.com.au](http://www.retsel.com.au)

**STONEGROUND FLOUR** in-home, with a SCHNITZER German quality hand or electric stone mill, 6 models from \$178. SCHNITZER MILLS, 420 Freemantle Rd, BATHURST 2795. Ph: 02-6336-9100, [www.schnitzer.com.au](http://www.schnitzer.com.au)

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**WATER QUALITY TEST KITS:** arsenic, lead, coliform bacteria, pesticide, iron/hardness plus. \$50 ea. Ph: 0429-955-009.

**NATURAL SOLUTIONS,** naturopathic remedies able to assist with candida, low energy levels, insomnia, stress, low immune system, unbalanced blood sugar levels & any other conditions. Personalised herbal & alternative remedy packs available for \$39.95 incl postage & handling & telephone consultation. Please send money order with your address & telephone number to: Nicole Doellinger, 1 Garry Rd, KERNOT Vic 3979.

**ELMORE OIL** avail from APB Distribution, 2/4 Ramsay Crt, KANGAROO FLAT, Vic 3555. Ph: 03-5447-3711, fax: 03-5447-3722. Website: [www.elmoreoil.com.au](http://www.elmoreoil.com.au) We deliver anywhere in Australia & New Zealand.

**ELMORE OIL** distributed in Queensland & nth NSW by Tony Linford, GHC Wholesale, PO Box 3586, LOGANHOLME, Qld 4129. Ph: 0407-747-850, fax: 07-3801-4464.

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- Get ads in early so we have time to contact you to clarify any questions which may arise.
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- Let us know if you change your contact details after placing your ad. ☺

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**FREE CLASSIFIEDS FOR HORSES, LIVESTOCK AND PETS,** also crafts, gifts & more for sale. Wholesale & retail.

Website: [www.farmcraftandcountry.com.au](http://www.farmcraftandcountry.com.au)

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Website: [www.supermoulds.com.au](http://www.supermoulds.com.au)

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**INFORMATION ON HOME WOOD-FIRED PIZZA OVENS,** also hand-press orange juicer, from turned wood, similar to the one that operates at the Maldon Folk Festival. Ph: David, 03-5435-3574.

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**TOP SECRETS OF MULCH** in *The Miracle of Mulch* by Mary Horsfall: Everything you need to know about mulch to save water, save money, improve soil & have a healthy, lush, productive garden. \$20 for signed copy from author, incl postage, \$35 for two. Ph: 0417-569-411, or write to: Notable Products, PO Box 101, EUROA 3666.

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# GRASSIFIEDS

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Email: [jbarton@pipeline.com.au](mailto:jbarton@pipeline.com.au)

## COURSES

**WATER SELF-SUFFICIENCY COURSE:** With writer engineer Scott McFarlane. Topics: r/water tanks, water conservation, greywater reuse, compost toilets. At CERES, 8 Lee St, Brunswick East, 10am - 5pm, 1st Sunday of the month. Ph: 03-5175-0895.

Email: [mcfarlanes@netspace.net.au](mailto:mcfarlanes@netspace.net.au)

**CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAMS:** Aromatherapy Dip, Vitamin & Nutrition Therapy Dip, Animal Therapies (The Green Vet), Herbal Therapies, Folk Medicine, Psychic Healing, Celtic Wicca, Psychic Development. Free brochure from: Wiccan Home Studies (estab 25 yrs), The Friendly School, PO Box 138, SURRY HILLS 2010. Ph: 02-9319-6166.

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**NATIONAL ALLERGY ASSOCIATION** of Australia (NAAA) and ECO-CHOICE (our mail-order store). Enquiries; information; clinics; membership & catalogue. Contact NAAA, PO Box 48, HARRIS PARK, NSW 2150. Ph: 0415-928-028. Email: [naaaauz@yahoo.com](mailto:naaaauz@yahoo.com)

**AFFILIATED DONKEY SOCIETIES OF AUSTRALIA.** For info on membership, magazines and help avail write to Ms Ann Fletcher, 74 Bells Lane, KURMOND, NSW 2757. You will be contacted by the representative in your state.

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Website: [www.nimbinaustralia.com/sundara](http://www.nimbinaustralia.com/sundara).

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Website: [www.herononearth.com](http://www.herononearth.com)

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'GRASS ROOTS', copies free for the postage. Numbers 112 and 131 - 149. Email me please: [rasadover@iprimus.com.au](mailto:rasadover@iprimus.com.au) or ph/fax: 02-6684-9498.

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